

During 1919-22, the British rule was opposed through two mass movements—the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation. The Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movements had very distinct goals but they joined hands together against their common rival, the British. These movements **emerged from separate issues**, but **they adopted a common programme** of action—i.e. **non-violent and non-cooperation**.

The **First World War (1914-1918)** provided a background to these two movements. It had a profound impact on the world. India was affected too. Its consequences became the causes for events that led to the mass nationalist movement—**Non-Cooperation (Khilafat Movement) (1920-1922)**.

## EVENTS LEADING TO NON-COOPERATION (KHILAFAT MOVEMENT)

The background to the movements was provided by the impact of the **First World War, the Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms**.

### IMPACT OF FIRST WORLD WAR

#### Post war betrayal of Allied Nations

During the First World War, the Allied powers (**Britain, the United States, France, Italy and Japan**) had promised their colonies an era of democracy and self-determination after the war. Such a promise was made to win the support of the people in the colonies. But in the **Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920)**, and in different peace settlements, all the **war promises were forgotten** and, in fact, **betrayed**. This caused the **feelings of resentment and rise of nationalist sentiments against masters in all the colonies**.

#### Rise in nationalist sentiments in different countries

In 1917, the **Bolshevik Party of workers** overthrew the Czarist regime and founded the Soviet Union, under the **leadership of Lenin**. This

event inspired the colonies around the world. It was believed that if the unarmed peasants and workers could carry out a revolution then the people of the subject nations too could fight for their independence provided they are well united, organised and determined to fight for the freedom. As a result, **similar nationalist movements surged in Ireland, Turkey, Egypt and other Arab countries of Northern Africa and West Asia**, Iran, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Malay, Indonesia, Indo-China, the Philippines, China and Korea.

### Ill-treatment of Defeated powers

Colonies of defeated powers in the **First World War, Germany and Turkey** were divided among the victorious powers. The ill-treatment towards Turkey, which was considered **Caliph** of the Muslim world, displeased Muslims all over the globe against the **British**.

### Economic Hardship

During the post-First World War period, the **prices of daily commodities increased** sharply and the worst sufferers were the common people. The volume of imports which declined during the First World War again increased towards the end of the war. As a result the **Indian industries suffered, production fell, many factories were closed** and the workers became its natural victims. The peasantry was also under the heavy burden of rents and taxes. So the economic situation of the country in the post-war years became alarming. In the political field the nationalists were disillusioned when the British did not keep their promise of bringing in a new era of democracy and self-determination for the people. This strengthened the anti-British attitude of the Indians.

### ROWLATT ACT, 1919

The next important landmark of this period was the passing of the Rowlatt Act in March 1919. This Act **empowered the Government to imprison any person without trial and conviction in a court of law**. Its basic aim was to imprison the



nationalists without giving them the opportunity to defend themselves. Throughout the World War, the repressive measures against the extremist and revolutionaries had continued in British India. Many of them were hanged or imprisoned for long terms. Gandhi and his associates were shocked. It was the '**Satyagraha Sabha**' founded by Gandhi, which pledged to disobey the Act first. **March and April 1919** witnessed a remarkable political awakening in India. There were **hartals (strikes)** and **demonstrations against the Rowlatt Act**.

### JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

The same period witnessed the naked brutality of the British Imperialists at Jallianwala Bagh, in Amritsar. An unarmed but large crowd had gathered on 13 April 1919 at Jallianwala Bagh to protest against the arrest of their popular leaders, **Saifuddin Kitchlu and Dr. Satyapal**. **General Dyer** (the military commander of Amritsar) ordered his troops to open fire without warning on the unarmed crowd, in a park from which there was no way out. Thousands were killed and wounded. This shocked the whole world. The famous poet Rabindranath Tagore renounced his Knighthood in protest.

### **DO YOU KNOW?**

#### **Udham Singh**

A Sikh teenager who was raised at Khalsa Orphanage named Udham Singh saw the happening of Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre in his own eyes. To avenge the killings of Jallianwalla Bagh, on 30 March 1940, he assassinated **Michael O'Dwyer** in Caxton Hall of London. **Udham Singh** was hanged at **Pentonville jail, London**.

Note: **Michael O'Dwyer** was the Lt. Governor of Punjab and the military commander was **General Reginald Dyer**.

### MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REFORMS

In return for cooperation during war, Indian people were expecting some form of autonomy in self-rule. Indian intelligentsia and nationalist

leaders were heavily disappointed with **Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (Government of India Act, 1919)**. The reform proposals failed to satisfy the rising demand of the Indians for self-government. The majority of the leaders condemned it as "**disappointing and unsatisfactory**." It was made clear that the British had **no intention of sharing political powers with Indians**.

All these developments prepared the ground for a popular upsurge against the British Government. The **Khilafat issue** gave an added advantage to get the Muslim support and the final touch was given by Gandhi's leadership.

The Khilafat-Non-Cooperation movement was the culmination of effects of all these elements. Let's look at the **Khilafat Issue**.

### THE KHILAFAT ISSUE

During the First World War, Turkey allied with Germany and Austria against the British. The Indian Muslims regarded the Sultan of Turkey as their spiritual leader Khalifa. So, naturally their sympathies were with Turkey. After the war, the British removed the Khalifa from power in Turkey. Hence, the Muslims started the Khilafat movement in India for the **restoration of the Khalifa's position**. Their main demands were:

1. Khalifa's control should be retained over the Muslim sacred places,
2. In territorial adjustments after the war the Khalifa should be left with sufficient territories

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE KHILAFAT-NON-COOPERATION PROGRAMME

#### **Khilafat Committee (1919)**

In early 1919, a Khilafat Committee was formed in Bombay. The initiative was taken by Muslim merchants and their actions were confined to meetings, petitions and deputation in favor of the Khalifa. However, there soon emerged a militant trend within the movement. The leaders of this



trend were not satisfied with a moderate approach. Instead they preached for the launching of a countrywide movement. They advocated, for the first time, at the **All India Khilafat Conference in Delhi (22-23 November 1919)**, **non-cooperation with the British Government in India**. It was in this conference that **Hasrat Mohani** made a call for the boycott of British goods. The Khilafat leadership clearly spelt out that in case the peace terms after the war were unfavorable to Muslims, they would stop all cooperation with the Government.

In April 1920, **Shaukat Ali** warned the British that in case the Government failed to pacify Indian Muslims, "we would start a joint Hindu-Muslim movement of non-cooperation." **Shaukat Ali** further stressed that the movement would start "under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, a man who commands the respect of both Hindus and Muslims".

The **Khilafat issue was not directly linked with politics in India but the Khilafat leaders were eager in enlisting the support of Hindus**. **Gandhiji saw in this an opportunity to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity against the British**. But in spite of his support to the Khilafat issue and being the **president of the All India Khilafat Committee, Gandhiji till May 1920 had adopted a moderate approach**. However, the publication of the terms of the Treaty with Turkey, which were very harsh towards Turkey, and the publication of the Hunter Committee Report on 'Punjab disturbances' in May 1920, infuriated the Indians and **Gandhiji now took an open position**.

The **Central Khilafat Committee met at Allahabad** from 1st to 3rd June 1920. The meeting was attended by a number of Congress and Khilafat leaders. In this meeting a **programme of non-cooperation towards the Indian British Government was declared**. This was to include:

1. Boycott of titles conferred by the Government,
2. Boycott of civil services, army and police, i.e. all government jobs, and
3. Non-payment of taxes to the Government.

**August 1st, 1920 was fixed as the date to start the movement**. Gandhiji insisted that unless the

Punjab and Khilafat wrongs were undone, there would be non-cooperation with the Government. For the success of this movement, **Congress support was essential**. Therefore, **Gandhiji took the efforts to make the Congress adopt non-cooperation**.

Gandhiji hoped that by coupling **non-cooperation with Khilafat, India's two major religious communities, Hindus and Muslims**, could collectively bring an end to colonial rule. These movements certainly unleashed a surge of popular action that was altogether unprecedented in colonial India.

### **CONGRESS STAND ON KHILAFAT QUESTION**

It was not an easy task for Gandhiji to get the entire Congress to agree to approve his programme of political action. The **Congress was not united on this form of political action i.e. Satyagraha and non-cooperation**. **Tilak was opposed to having an alliance with Muslim leaders over a religious issue**. He was also **not confident of Satyagraha as an instrument of politics**. According to Tilak, the basis of cooperation between Hindus and Muslims should be a secular one like the **Lucknow Pact (1916)**. A lot depended on **Tilak's attitude** whether hostile or neutral, but unfortunately he **passed away on 1st August 1920**. **Jawaharlal Nehru** wrote in his autobiography that "almost the entire old Guard of the Congress opposed Gandhiji's resolution of non-cooperation."

Despite opposition, Gandhiji was able to get the approval of the Congress over use of Satyagraha and non-cooperation as a political action against the government over Khilafat question. **The main reasons were:**

1. **Hindu-Muslim unity Factor:** It was felt that Khilafat issue was a golden opportunity to cement Hindu-Muslim unity and to bring Muslim masses into the national movement.
2. **No Result from constitutional struggle:** The **Congress was losing faith in constitutional struggle**, especially after the Jallianwala Bagh incidents and the Hunter Committee Report.



3. **Masses were ready:** The Congress was aware that the masses were eager to give expression to their discontent.

### MUSLIM LEAGUE SUPPORT TO CONGRESS

The Muslim League also decided to give full support to the Congress and its agitations.

## LAUNCH OF NON-COOPERATION KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

### CALCUTTA TO NAGPUR SESSION

#### Background

The **Treaty of Sevres** was signed with Turkey in **May 1920**. This treaty completely dismembered Turkey. An all-party conference was held at Allahabad in **June 1920**. It **approved a programme of boycott of schools, colleges and law courts**. **Gandhiji was asked to lead the movement**. In **August 1920**, the non-cooperation movement was **formally launched** by the **Khilafat Committee**.

#### Special Congress Session, Calcutta (September 1920)

The **All India Congress Committee** was held at Calcutta in September 1920. **Lala Lajpat Rai** was its president. Congress approved a **non-cooperation programme** till the Punjab (Jallianwala Bagh incident) and Khilafat wrongs were removed and swaraj was established. **The Calcutta Congress approved a programme of:**

- Boycott of courts
- Boycott of schools and colleges
- Surrendering titles and honours
- Practicing hand-weaving and hand-spinning for producing Khadi
- Boycott of legislative councils;

#### Organisational changes in the Congress

Provincial Congress Committees were organised on linguistic basis.

- **At later stage:** Programmes would include resignation from government civil service, mass civil disobedience and refusal to pay taxes
- Participants of the movement were supposed to **work for Hindu-Muslim unity and for removal of untouchability** remaining non-violent only.

#### Idea of Swaraj

**Note:** The precise nature of the **Swaraj** at which Gandhiji aimed during Non-cooperation was not clear to contemporaries nationalist. Although Gandhiji said that it was "**Parliamentary Swaraj** in accordance with the wishes of the people of India", **Jawaharlal Nehru** admitted that it was a "**vague swaraj with no clear ideology behind it**".

#### Debate over boycotting of council elections

There were some differences over boycotting the legislative council. **Lala Lajpat Rai and C.R. Das** vehemently opposed the Gandhian idea of boycotting council elections. However to maintain congress discipline, these leaders boycotted elections held in November 1920 and the majority of the voters too stayed away. In the midst of a lot of controversies and debates over the Gandhian programme, the **Congress session started at Nagpur from 26 December 1920**.

#### Nagpur Session, December 1920

Nagpur session was presided by **C. Vijayaraghavachariar**. The Nagpur Congress saw the dramatic change of **C.R. Das** of Bengal from a critic of Gandhiji's programme to the mover of the non-cooperation resolution at Nagpur. The Nagpur session endorsed the programme of non-cooperation. Also, **following changes were made in the Congress:**

#### Change in Principles

The **new goal of the congress** was to attain swaraj through peaceful and legitimate means rather than attainment of self-government through constitutional means.



Organisational changes in the Congress	Change in Principles
Congress was now to be led by a Working Committee of 15 members, including the President and Secretaries.	Congress committed itself to extra- constitutional mass struggle
Ward committees was organized	
Entry fee was reduced to <b>four annas</b> .	
Formation of Congress Committees from <b>town to village level</b>	

This was the **first positive move on the part of the Congress** to make it a **real mass based political party**. This period also witnessed a fundamental change in the social composition of the party as well as in its outlook and policies. Gandhi with a novel weapon of Satyagraha emerged as the mass leader in the Congress party.

### Reaction of various segments after the congress endorsed non-cooperation programme

- Revolutionary terrorists, especially those from Bengal pledged support to the Congress programme.
- **Some leaders** like Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Annie Besant, G.S. Kharpade and B.C. Pal **left the Congress**. They believed in a constitutional and lawful struggle and not extra constitutional struggle.
- **Surendranath Banerjee** founded the **Indian National Liberal Federation** and thereafter played a minor role in national politics.

## MAIN PHASES OF THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

### COURSE OF THE MOVEMENT

The campaign for non-cooperation and boycott started with great enthusiasm from early 1921. In the **first phase** from **January to March 1921**, the main emphasis was on the boycott of schools,

colleges, law courts and the use of Charkha. There was widespread student unrest and top lawyers like **C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru gave up their legal practice**. This phase was followed by the **second phase** starting from **April 1921**. In this phase the basic objectives were the collection of Rs. one crore for the Tilak Swaraj Fund by August 1921, enrolling one crore Congress members and installing 20 lakh Charkhas by 30 June. In the **third phase**, starting from July, the stress was on boycott of foreign cloth, boycott of the forthcoming visit of the Prince of Wales in November, 1921, popularization of Charkha and Khadi, and Jail Bhara by Congress volunteers. In the **last phase**, since November 1921, a shift towards **radicalism** was visible.

### Peoples' Response to the Movement

**Students:** With the start of the movement, a large number of students left government aided colleges and schools and joined national institutions that had been started in different parts of the country like:

- Gujarat Vidyapeeth founded by **Mahatma Gandhi** (1920)
- Bihar Vidyapeeth founded by **Mahatma Gandhi** (1921). Other leaders associated with it were Maulana Mazharul Haq and Rajendra Prasad.
- Jamia Millia Islamia founded by **Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, Abdul Majeed Khwaja, and Zakir Hussain** under the presidency of **Mahmud Hasan Deobandi** (1920).



- Kashi Vidyapeeth founded by **Babu Shiv Prasad Gupta** and **Bhagwan Das** (1921).

**Lawyers:** Many lawyers, including C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, C. Rajagopalachari, Sardar Patel, T. Prakasam and Asaf Ali gave up their law practice.

**Women:** They gave up purdah and offered their ornaments for the **Tilak Fund**. They joined the movement in large numbers and took **active part in picketing before the shops selling foreign cloth and liquor**.

**Muslims:** In July, 1921 Ali brothers asked Muslims to resign from the Army as it was unreligious.

**Congress:** The Congress allowed Provincial Congress Committees to start civil disobedience including the non-payment of taxes, if the Committee opined that people of the province are ready.

#### **Actions undertaken by masses:**

- Foreign clothes were burnt publicly and their imports fell by half.
- Picketing of shops selling foreign liquor and of toddy shops was undertaken at many places.
- **Congress volunteer corps** emerged as the parallel police.
- A no-tax movement against union board taxes in Midnapore (Bengal) and in Guntur (Andhra) was going on.
- Strikes in tea plantations in Assam were organised under the leadership of J.M. Sengupta.

#### **SPREAD OF THE MOVEMENT: LOCAL VARIATIONS**

The call for non-cooperation and boycott got massive response from different parts of India. The years 1921 and 1922 were marked by massive popular protests against the British Raj in India. However, the **movement was shaped in most places according to local conditions**. It was the local grievances of the people which found expression through this movement, and the instructions of the

Congress leadership were not always followed. Let us take a brief look at **different regions in relation to the Non-Cooperation Movement**.

#### **Bengal**

Mass participation in the Gandhian method of protest was less enthusiastic in Bengal. **Rabindranath Tagore** appreciated Gandhiji for bringing to the masses a new consciousness. But he attacked what he called Gandhiji's 'narrowness, obscurantism' and Charkha. **Elites of Calcutta** were critical of some Gandhian ways. But the **non-cooperation movement brought about unique communal unity and awakening in the urban and rural masses. Hartals, strikes and mass courting of arrest** greatly pressurized the British Government to change its attitude towards India.

In the countryside, an intense propaganda was carried on and as a Government report said, "The things that are said and done in Gandhiji's name would make that gentleman shudder, if ever he heard of a fraction of them." The **villagers in Midnapur** district opposed the newly **created Union Boards and the tax imposed by them**. The people refused to pay taxes or agricultural rent to the Government or private landlords in the outlying districts of North Bengal.

#### **Bihar**

In Bihar the local issue of the right to graze cattle on common government wastelands and the confrontation between the "lower and upper castes" on **the issue of the lower caste taking the sacred thread got merged with the Non-Cooperation Movement**. North Bihar, especially Champaran, Saran, Muzaffarpur and Purnia districts, became the storm centres of the movement by November 1921. Looting of the Hat (village market) and confrontation with the police became frequent.

#### **United Provinces**

The United Provinces became a strong base of the Gandhian Non-Cooperation Movement. Here the movement got entangled with the kisan



movement. Despite the repeated appeal for non-violence from the Congress leadership, the peasants rose in revolt not only against Talukdars but also, against merchants. **Between January and March 1921** the districts of Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh, Faizabad and Sultanpur witnessed widespread agrarian riots under the **leadership of Baba Ram Chandra**. In late 1921 there was another strong peasant outburst which is known as the **'Eka' movement under a radical leader Madari Pasi**.

### Punjab

Here the powerful **Akali movement** for reform and **control of the Gurdwaras** got closely identified with non-cooperation. Although Gandhiji gave it only guarded approval, his non-cooperation tactic was consistently used by the Akalis. It showed a remarkable communal unity between the Sikhs, the Muslims and the Hindus.

### Maharashtra

In Maharashtra non-cooperation remained relatively weak because the supporters of Tilak were unenthusiastic about Gandhiji, and Non-Brahmans felt that the Congress was a Chitpavan-led affair. The higher castes disliked Gandhiji's emphasis on the elevation of the depressed classes and their participation in the Non-Cooperation Movement.

### Assam

Non-Cooperation received massive support in the distant province of Assam. In the gardens of Assam the coolies rose in revolt with shouts of "Gandhi Maharaj Ki Jai" for higher wages and better conditions of work. There were also signs of a no-revenue movement among peasants.

### Andhra

In Andhra the grievances of tribal and other peasants against forest laws got linked to the Non-Cooperation Movement. A large number of these people met Gandhiji in Cudappa in September 1921 to get their taxes reduced and forest restrictions removed. Forest officials were

boycotted. A powerful movement for non-payment of land revenue also developed in Andhra between December 1921 and February 1922. In the same period **Alluri Sitaram Raju** organised the tribals in Andhra and combined their demands with those of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

### Rajasthan

Peasant movements in the princely states of Rajasthan strengthened the Non-Cooperation Movement. The peasants protested against cesses and beggars. The **Bijolia Movement** in Mewar and the **Bhil Movement** under **Motilal Tejawat** acquired impetus from the Non-Cooperation Movement.

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Government very carefully observed the developments and collected secret reports from the provinces about the progress of the movement. When the movement ultimately started, the Government took **recourse to repression**. The **Congress and the Khilafat volunteer organizations** were declared unlawful. Congress volunteer corps were declared illegal. Public assemblies and processions were banned. At many places the police fired on the Satyagrahis. **Arrests and Lathi charges became a common scene**. By the end of 1921 **all important leaders except Gandhiji were imprisoned**.

Alarmed by Hindu-Muslim unity, the Government also tried to create a split between the Congress and the Khilafatists.

#### Visit of the Prince of Wales

When the Prince of Wales arrived in Bombay, **November 1921**, strikes and demonstrations were held. The day the Prince landed in Bombay was **observed as a day of hartal all over the country**. In Bombay, **Gandhiji addressed** a meeting in the compound of the **Elphinstone Mill** owned by the **nationalist Umar Shobhani**, and lit a **huge bonfire of foreign cloth**. However, clashes occurred between those who had gone to attend the welcome function and the crowd returning from



Gandhiji's meeting. Riots followed, in which **Parsis, Christians, Anglo-Indians became targets of attack as identifiable loyalists**. Gandhiji had to go on a three day fast to reduce the tension.

The whole sequence of events left Gandhiji disturbed and worried about the likelihood of recurrence of violence once mass civil disobedience was sanctioned.

## LAST PHASE OF THE MOVEMENT

The Annual Congress Session was held at Ahmedabad in December **1921**. It was presided formally by C. R. Das (**he was in Jail, hence Acting President: Hakim Ajmal Khan**). The session was held to start the civil disobedience programme. Hakim Ajmal Khan appointed Gandhiji as the sole authority on the issue of the start of the civil disobedience programme. On **February 1, 1922** Gandhiji sent an ultimatum to the viceroy that he could start **mass civil disobedience** if the political prisoners were not released and repressive measures not abandoned. Since the whole country was not fit for civil disobedience he decided to launch it on 5th February in Bardoli.

## CHAURI CHAURA INCIDENT AND WITHDRAWAL OF THE MOVEMENT

The common people and the nationalist workers were exuberant that Swaraj would dawn soon and participated actively in the struggle. It had attracted all classes of people including the tribals living in the jungles. But at the same time sporadic violence was also witnessed in the Country.

**Chauri-Chaura**, a village in Gorakhpur district of UP had **an organized volunteer group** which was participating and leading the picketing of liquor shops and local bazaars against high prices. On **5th February 1922** the police in Chauri-Chaura village (Village in Gorakhpur district in United Provinces) had beaten up the leader of a group of volunteers

campaigning against liquor sale and high food prices. The police had then **opened fire on the crowd** which had come to protest before the police station. The angry crowd attacked and burnt the police station that resulted in 22 policemen being burnt alive. This incident is known as the Chauri Chaura incident.

Gandhiji was not happy with the incident due to its violent nature. He therefore **immediately announced the withdrawal of the movement**.

## Bardoli Resolution (February, 1922)

The **Congress Working Committee** ratified the decision of Gandhiji at Bardoli. It resolved to stop all activity that led to breaking of the law. It also urged the masses to take up constructive work which was to include: **popularisation of khadi, national schools, and campaigning for temperance, work for Hindu-Muslim unity and against untouchability**.

However, most of the nationalist leaders including **C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Subhash Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru**, however, expressed their unwillingness at Gandhiji's decision to withdraw the movement.

Gandhiji started his five day fast as a penance. Thus, the first non-cooperation virtually came to an end. **Gandhiji was arrested on 10 March, 1922 and was sentenced to six years' imprisonment**.

## Views

### Subhas Chandra Bose

To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling point was nothing short of a national calamity. The principal lieutenants of the Mahatma, Deshbandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai, who were all in prison, shared the popular resentment. I would suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent.

**M.K. Gandhi, in Young India, February 16, 1922**



## CAUSES OF WITHDRAWAL

Gandhiji had following observations regarding the people participating in the **Non-Cooperation Movement**:

- People **had not learnt or fully understood the method of non-violence**. Gandhiji knew that if the movement turns violent the government would easily suppress the movement using force under the guise of stopping violence.
- The **movement was also showing signs of fatigue**. This was natural as it is not possible to sustain any movement at a high pitch for very long. The government seemed to be in no mood for negotiations.
- The central theme of the agitation—the **Khilafat question**—also declined. In November 1922, the people of Turkey rose under **Mustafa Kamal Pasha** and the Sultan of Turkey was deprived of his political power. Turkey **was made a secular state**. Thus, the **Khilafat question lost its relevance**. A European style of legal system was established in Turkey and extensive rights granted to women, education was nationalized and agriculture and industries were organised on the modern European lines. The **Caliphate** was finally abolished in **1924**.

## EVALUATION OF KHILAFAT NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

There were many intended and unintended consequences of the **Khilafat-Non-Cooperation Movement**. By the impact of these consequences we can evaluate the movement and its success

as well as its importance in the **Indian Freedom Struggle**.

- **Urban Muslim became the part of national movement**: The non-Cooperation movement brought the urban Muslims into the national movement.
- **Communalisation of the national politics**: Bringing Muslims to national movement communalized the Indian national politics. Indian National leaders failed to raise the religious political consciousness of the Muslims to a level of secular political consciousness.
- **Spirit of nationalist sentiment spread across the Country**: With the Non-Cooperation Movement, nationalist sentiments reached every nook and corner of the country and politicised every strata of population—the artisans, peasants, students, urban poor, women, traders, etc. It was this politicisation that imparted a revolutionary character to the national movement in later times.
- **Myths of colonial rule was diminished**: The myths of foreign rule that it was in the **interest of the people and the British rule was invincible**, both were shaken and challenged. The first myth had been exploded by the **economic critique by Moderate nationalists**. The second myth had been challenged by **Satyagraha through mass struggle**.
- **Boosted the confidence of Indian masses**: The non-cooperation movement gave Indian people confidence to fight the foreign rule. They now believed that there was a chance of victory.



The awakening of the peasantry during this phase owed its development and success to the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Indian National Congress in fact, experienced a metamorphosis with the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political scene. The sphere of influence of the Congress, which was restricted to the middle-class intelligentsia, was now extended, and it came to assume a mass character. Non-Cooperation movement gave rise to many local struggles such as Awadh Kisan Movement (UP), Eka Movement (UP) and Mappila Revolt (Malabar).

### MOPLAH REBELLION (1921)

The turbulent history of the Moplahs of Malabar reveals yet another facet of the anti-landlord and anti-foreign discontent. A bitter anti-white temper had developed among sections of the Malabar Muslims ever since the Portuguese had come in 1498 to capture the spice trade and seek to extend Christianity. However, with the **rise in Portuguese commercial power, the Moplahs found themselves a competitor** and increasingly started moving inland in search of new economic opportunities. British rule, with its insistence on landlord rights, had restored and greatly improved the position of upper caste Namboodri and Nair jenmis (many of whom had been driven out by Tipu Sultan), and consequently worsened the conditions of tenants (kanamdars) and farmers (verumpattamdars), largely Muslims, known locally as Moplah.

### ADVENT OF REBELLION

Fueled by the fiery speeches by Muslim religious leaders and anti-British sentiments, the Moplahs launched a **violent rebellion**. Many acts of violence were reported and a series of persecutions were committed against British landowners and Hindus. While there are some who call it a case of religious fanaticism, there are others who look at it as an instance of struggle against British authority. Then there are others also who perceive the Malabar rebellion to be a peasant revolt against

unfair practices of the landlords. While historians continue to debate the issue, the broad consensus on the episode underscores that they began as a struggle against political power, which then took a communal color. Most of the **landlords were Namboodiri Brahmins** while most of the tenants were Moplah Muslims. The riots led to the mass killings of Hindus, raping of women, forced religious conversions, destruction or damage of nearly 300 temples, loot and arson of properties worth crores of rupees and burning of houses belonging to the Hindus.

### CAUSE OF THE MOVEMENT

- **Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement:** The trigger of the uprising came from the Non-Cooperation launched by the Congress in 1920 along with the **Khilafat agitation**. The **anti-British sentiment fueled by these agitations** affected the Muslim Moplahs.
- **New Tenancy Laws:** After the death of **Tipu Sultan** in 1799 in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, Malabar had come under British authority as part of the Madras Presidency. The **British had introduced new tenancy laws** that tremendously favored the landlords known as Jenmis and instituted a far more exploitative system for peasants than before. The **new laws deprived the peasants of all guaranteed rights to the land**, share in the produce they earlier got and in effect rendered them landless.

### RESULT

#### Wagon Tragedy:

In November 1921, 67 **Moplah prisoners were killed** when they were being transported in a closed freight wagon from Tirur to the Central Prison in Podanur. They **died of suffocation**. This event is called the Wagon Tragedy.

At first, the movement had the support of Mahatma Gandhi and other Indian nationalist



leaders, but when it turned violent, they distanced themselves from it. In August 1921, the arrest of a respected priest leader, **Ali Musaliar**, sparked large-scale riots.

By the **end of 1921, the rebellion was crushed by the British** who had raised a special battalion, the Malabar Special Force for the riot.

## **BARDOLI SATYAGRAHA(1928)**

The Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928, led and organized by **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, demonstrated the power and potential of non-violence in the cause of peasant self-respect. In this struggle, Kisan in rural Gujarat mobilized against the oppressive agrarian policies of the colonial state. Bardoli Taluk in present-day Gujarat was hit by floods and famines in 1925, which negatively impacted crop yields. This affected the farmers financially.

### **ADVENT OF CRISIS**

The movement sparked off in January 1926 when the authorities decided to increase the land revenue by 30 percent. Despite petitions and calls from civic groups and farmers to review this unfair increase in tax rates, the government decided to go ahead with tax collection. The Congress leaders were quick to protest and a **Bardoli Inquiry Committee** was set up to go into the issue. As per the report of the committee, the revenue hike was unjustified.

### **EMERGENCE OF VALLABHAI PATEL**

In February 1926, Vallabhbhai Patel was called to lead the movement. Patel only agreed to take on the leadership role after receiving assurances from the peasants of their commitment to the movement. He informed them of the possible consequences of their move such as confiscation of land and property and imprisonment. He asked the peasants to show courage and sacrifice: "What are you afraid of?" he said in Gujarati: "Confiscation? You waste thousands after marriage ceremonies, then why worry if the [government] officers take

away goods worth Rs. 200 or Rs. 500?" **The women of Bardoli gave him the title of "Sardar"**. Gandhiji, through his writings in 'Young India' magazine, supported the movement.

### **METHODS ADOPTED BY VALLABHAI PATEL**

Under Patel, the Bardoli peasants resolved to refuse payments of the revised assessment until the government appointed an independent tribunal or accepted the current amount as full payment. To organize the movement, Patel set up 13 chhavanis or workers' camps in the taluqa. The volunteers came from Hindu, Muslim and Parsi communities also. Bardoli Satyagraha Patrika was brought out to mobilize public opinion. Door-to-door campaigning was also done. Peasants were asked to take oaths in the name of god that they would not pay the taxes. An intelligence wing was set up to make sure all the tenants followed the movement's resolutions. Those who opposed the movement faced a social boycott. Special emphasis was placed on the mobilization of women.

### **SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL LEADERS**

K.M. Munshi and Lalji Naranji resigned from the Bombay Legislative Council in support of the movement. By August 1928, massive tension had built up in the area. There were prospects of a railway strike in Bombay. Gandhi reached Bardoli to stand by in case of any emergency. The government was looking for a graceful withdrawal now. It set the condition that first the enhanced rent be paid by all the occupants (not actually done). Then, a **committee (Maxwell-Broomfield)** went into the whole affair.

### **RESULT**

The Committee found the revenue hike to be unjustified and recommended a rise of 6.03 per cent only. The confiscated land was given back to the peasants. After the success of the Bardoli Satyagraha, Patel emerged as a national leader. He showed his remarkable organizing skills.



## DRAWBACKS OF THE MOVEMENT

The movement was focused on the conditions of the rich and middle-class farmers and largely neglected the poor farmers. It did not raise the problem of Hali Pratha (a kind of bonded labour system). It is said that the movement was an experiment on Satyagraha as a method of freedom struggle. The basic problems of the peasants were not addressed.

## AWADH KISAN MOVEMENT (UP)

Awadh Kisan Movement was founded in 1920 by **Baba Ram Chandra**. Other leaders associated with it were **Jawaharlal Nehru, Mata Badal Pande, Deo Narayan Pande and Kedar Nath**.

## CAUSE OF THE MOVEMENT

Very high rents, illegal levies, renewal fees or nazrana, and arbitrary evictions from land or bedakhli had made life miserable for the majority of cultivators. The Awadh Kisan sabha asked the kisans to:

- Refuse to till **bedakhli land**;
- Not to offer **hari and begar** (forms of unpaid labour); and
- To **solve their disputes through panchayats**.

## RESULT

The peasant movement became violent, houses of talukdars and merchants were assaulted, and bazaars were robbed. The movement was later suppressed by the British owing to **government repression** and **passage of the Awadh Rent (Amendment) Act**.

## Sahajanand Saraswati

On December 5th, 1920, in Patna, the **Dasnami Sannyasi Sahajanand Saraswati** encountered Mahatma Gandhi for the first time. Sahajanand was already known in social-reform circles in Bihar as an energetic activist and educator working to promote Bhumihar Brahman identity. Inspired by the Mahatma's radical reformulation of Indian nationalism, 'the Swami' (as Sahajanand would soon come to be known) threw himself into nationalist politics and the Indian National Congress.

He started the Kisan Sabha movement in Bihar and in 1929 formed the **Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha (BPKS)** in order to mobilize peasant grievances against the zamindari attacks on their occupancy rights, and thus sparking the farmers' movements in India. This organization quickly became the largest organization of its kind in India, catapulting the Swami onto the national stage. Gradually the peasant movement intensified and spread across India. In Andhra Pradesh it launched an anti-settlement agitation against Zamindari zulum in 1927. Also a powerful struggle was initiated against the oppressive forest laws in South India in 1927.

## Other Peasant Struggles

- **Eka Movement**: It was a peasant movement which surfaced in **Hardoi, Bahraich** and **Sitapur** during the end of **1921**. It was headed by **Madari Pasi**.
- **Cause of the movement**: The main reason for the movement was high rent, which was generally higher than 50% of recorded rent in some areas. **Oppression by 'Thekedars'** who were entrusted to **collect rent** contributed to this movement.
- **Result**: The movement turned violent which was suppressed by the British by the end of March 1922.
- In **Midnapur**, a **cultivators' strike against a White zamindari** company was led by a **Calcutta medical student**.
- **Defiance of forest laws** became popular in **Andhra**.
- **Peasants and tribals** in some of the Rajasthan states began movements for securing better conditions of life.



Sikhism, as a religion, was started as a result of social protest against ritualism and casteism. However, the very religion had soon become a victim of social evils like caste system, religious ritualism, dowry system, etc. Gurudwaras were badly managed and ridden with corruption. The existing rationalist and progressive ideas of the 19th century influenced the Sikh community. As a result, a number of reform movements tried to remove these evils of which the Akali Movement was the most powerful and successful reform movement.

### BEGINNING OF THE AKALI MOVEMENT

In 1873, the **Singh Sabha movement** was founded at Amritsar. Its objective was twofold-

1. It planned to bring to the Sikh community the benefits of Western enlightenment through modern education. Accordingly, the Sabha opened a network of Khalsa schools and colleges throughout Punjab.
2. Also, it countered the evangelizing activities of the Christian missionaries as well as Hindu revivalists.

The Akali movement was an offshoot of the **Singh Sabha movement**. The Akali movement in Punjab was a religious issue but ended up being an important part of the freedom struggle. The central Punjab countryside, dominated by the Sikhs, was deeply shaken by the powerful wave of Akali, first a rather independent religious reform movement which, for a time, was closely identified with non-cooperation.

The movement aimed at liberating the Sikh Gurudwaras from the shackles of corrupt Udasi mahants. The Akali movement has been described by a famous historian Richard Fox as representing 'the longest and largest application of the Gandhian programme of Satyagraha or non-violence resistance'.

### CAUSE OF THE MOVEMENT

The Akali movement arose with the objective of freeing the Gurudwaras (Sikh temples) from the control of ignorant and **corrupt mahants** (priests). The Gurudwaras had been heavily endowed with revenue-free land and money by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sikh chieftains and other devout Sikhs during the 18th and 19th centuries. In time, corruption spread among these mahants and they began to treat the offerings and other income of the Gurudwaras as their personal income. Many of them began to live a life of luxury and dissipation. Apart from the mahants, some control over the Gurudwaras was exercised by Government-nominated managers and custodians, **after the British annexation of Punjab in 1849**. They often collaborated with mahants. Sikh reformers and nationalists, meanwhile, wanted deep reform of the Gurudwaras by removing them from the control of the mahants and agents of the colonial regime.

**Corrupt Mahants:** The Akalis were fighting to wrest control over the Sikh shrines (Gurudwaras) from **corrupt mahants**, who had established a mutually profitable alliance with British officials. Arur Singh, the government-appointed manager of the Amritsar Golden Temple, had even gone to the extent of inviting General Dyer to become an honorary Sikh. Even Nikalseyan Sahib (Nicholson, the butcher of Delhi in 1857) 'became a Sikh'. These mahants were loyalists and enjoyed government patronage. The Government gave full support to the mahants. It used them and the managers to preach loyalism to the Sikhs and to keep them away from the rising nationalist movement.

### AKALI'S ROLE AND STRUGGLE FOR SGPC

To control and manage the Golden Temple, the Akal Takht and other Gurudwaras, a representative assembly of nearly 10,000 reformers met in November 1920 and elected a committee of 175 to be known as the **Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak**



**Committee (SGPC).** Also, the need was felt for a central body which would organize the struggle on a more systematic basis. Its aims were to reform the Sikh Gurudwaras and to reclaim control of the Sikh shrines from the hands of the government manipulated loyalist committees that included non-Sikhs. In December, as an auxiliary of the SGPC the Akali Dal was formed to coordinate jathas to wrest control of the shrines.

Already irritated by the administration of martial law and the Jallianwala bagh massacre, the Akalis came to a head-on collision with the government when in early 1921 it took the keys of the Golden Temple at Amritsar and appointed a new manager. When the Akalis protested, the government once more unleashed a repressive regime, and the latter responded with Satyagraha. **Gandhiji and the Congress supported the campaign,** which ultimately forced the government to surrender the keys and administration of the temple to the Akalis and pass the **Sikh Gurudwaras Act in 1922, which was later amended in 1925.**

The Gurudwaras act of 1922 gave the control of Gurudwaras to the Sikh masses to be administered through Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) as the apex body. But the middle-class Sikh leadership had only selectively adopted the non-cooperation programme and once their limited goal was achieved, they did not allow their distinctive religious struggle to be completely appropriated by the Congress agitation. The Akali leaders played a notable role in the national liberation struggle though some dissenting voices were heard occasionally.

## TEMPLE ENTRY MOVEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

Until 1917, the National Congress refused to address issues of social reform due to fear that the growing political unity of the Indian people would be disrupted. After this it reversed this position

when it passed a resolution urging upon the people 'the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by customs upon the depressed classes.' At this stage, **Lokamanya Tilak also denounced untouchability** and supported its removal. But they did not take any concrete steps in that direction. Among the national leaders, it was Gandhi who gave top priority to the removal of untouchability and declared that this was no less important than the political struggle for freedom. In 1923, Congress decided to take active measures for the eradication of untouchability.

### CAUSES OF THE MOVEMENT

The nationalist challenge in this respect came to be symbolized by some famous struggles in Kerala. The problem was particularly acute in Kerala where the depressed classes or **avarnas** (those without caste, later known as Harijans) were subjected to degrading and dehumanizing social disabilities. **For example,** they suffered not only from untouchability but also theendal or distance pollution — the **Ezhavas and Putayyas** could not approach the higher caste nearer than 16 feet and 72 feet respectively. Struggle against these disabilities was being waged since the end of 19th century by several reformers and intellectuals such as **Sri Narayan Guru, N. Kumaran Asan and T.K. Madhavan.**

### VAIKOM SATYAGRAHA

Immediately after the **Kakinada session,** the **Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (KPCC)** addressed the eradication of untouchability as a priority issue. While carrying on a massive propaganda campaign against untouchability and for the educational and social up-liftment of the Harijans, it was decided to launch an immediate movement to open Hindu temples and all public roads to the avarnas or Harijans. A beginning was made in Vaikom, a village in Travancore. There was a major temple there, whose four walls were surrounded by temple roads which could not be used by avarnas like Ezhavas and Pulayyas.



## **METHODS ADOPTED**

The KPCC decided to use Satyagraha as a weapon to fight untouchability and to make a new beginning at Vaikom by defying the unapproachability rule by **leading a procession of savarnas (caste Hindus) and avarnas on the temple roads on 30 March 1924.** The news of the Satyagraha aroused immediate enthusiasm among political and social workers and led to an intense campaign to arouse the conscience of savarnas and mobilize their active support. The temple authorities and the Travancore Government erected barricades on the roads leading to the temple. On 30th March, the Satyagrahis, led by **K.P. Kesava Menon**, marched from the Satyagraha camp towards the temple. They, as well as the succeeding batches of Satyagrahis, consisting of both savarnas and avarnas, were arrested and sentenced to imprisonment.

## **ENTHUSIASM DEVELOPED FOR SATYAGRAHA**

The Vaikom Satyagraha created enthusiasm all over the country and volunteers began to arrive from different parts of India. **E.V. Ramaswami Naicker** (popularly known as Periyar later) led a jatha from Madurai and underwent imprisonment. On the other hand, the orthodox and reactionary section of the Hindu caste met in **Vaikom** and decided to boycott all members of the pro Satyagraha congress. On 31 October, a jatha of nearly one hundred caste Hindus started their march on foot to Trivandrum. It was given warm receptions at nearly 200 villages and towns on the way. By the time it reached Trivandrum, it consisted of over 1,000 persons. In early March 1925, Gandhiji began his tour of Kerala and met the officials. A compromise was arrived at.

## **ARRIVED AT SETTLEMENT**

The roads around the temple were opened to avarnas but those in the Sankethan of the temple remained closed for them. During his tour of Kerala, Gandhiji did not visit a single temple because the avarnas were kept away from it. The struggle against untouchability and for the social and economic upliftment of the depressed classes

continued all over India after 1924 as a part of the Gandhian constructive programme. Once again, the struggle was most intense in Kerala. Prodded by K Kelappan, **the KPCC took up the question of temple entry in 1931 during the period when the Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended.** A vast campaign and public meetings were organized throughout Malabar. The KPCC decided to make a beginning by organizing a temple entry Satyagraha at **Guruvayur on 1st November 1931.**

## **KERALA TEMPLE ENTRY OBSERVED**

The 1st of November was enthusiastically observed as **All-Kerala Temple Entry Day** with a programme of prayers, processions, meetings, receptions and fund collections. It was also observed in cities like **Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Colombo (Sri Lanka).** The popular response was tremendous. Many all-India leaders visited Malabar. Money and volunteers poured in from everywhere. The youth were especially attracted and were in the forefront of the struggle. The anti-untouchability movement gained great popularity. Many religious devotees transferred the offerings they would have made to the temple to the Satyagraha camp, **feeling that the camp was even more sacred than the temple.**

## **SCUFFLE BETWEEN TEMPLE AUTHORITIES AND SATYAGRAHIS**

The temple authorities also made arrangements to counter Satyagrahis. They put up barbed wire all around the temple and organized gangs of watchmen to keep the Satyagrahis out and to threaten them with beating. **On 1 November, sixteen white khadi-clad volunteers marched** to the eastern gate of the temple. Temple servants and local reactionaries began to use physical force against the peaceful and non-violent Satyagrahis while the police stood by. For example, **P Krishna Pillai and A.K. Gopalan**, who were to emerge later as major leaders of the Communist movement in Kerala, were mercilessly beaten. The Satyagraha continued even after the Civil Disobedience Movement was resumed in January 1932 and all



Congress Committees were declared unlawful and most of the Congressmen leading the Satyagraha were imprisoned.

### **NEW PHASE OF SATYAGRAHA BEGAN**

The Satyagraha entered a new phase on 21 September 1932 when **K. Kelappan went on a fast unto death before the temple until it was opened to the depressed classes**. The entire country was again stirred to its depths. Once again meetings and processions engulfed Kerala and many other parts of the country. Gandhiji made repeated appeals to Kelappan to break his fast, at least temporarily, with an assurance that he would himself, if necessary, undertake the task of getting the temple opened. Finally, Kelappan broke his fast on October 2, 1932. The Satyagraha was also suspended. But the temple entry campaign was carried on ever more vigorously. **A jatha led by A.K. Gopalan toured the whole of Kerala on foot**, carrying on propaganda and addressing massive meetings everywhere.

### **NEW TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SATYAGRAHA**

Even though the Guruvayur temple was not opened immediately, the Satyagraha was a great success in broader terms. As A.K. Gopalan has recorded in his autobiography, 'although the Guruvayur temple was still closed to Harijans, I saw that the movement had created an impetus for social change throughout the country. It led to a transformation everywhere'. The popular campaign against untouchability and for temple entry continued in the succeeding years. **In November 1936, the Maharaja of Travancore issued a proclamation throwing open all Government-controlled temples to all Hindus irrespective of caste**. Madras followed suit in 1938 when its Ministry was headed by **C. Rajagopalachari**. Other provinces under Congress rule also took similar steps.

### **OUTCOME OF THE MOVEMENT**

The temple entry campaign used every technique developed by the Indian people in the course of the nationalist struggle. Its organizers succeeded in building the broadest possible unity, imparting mass education, and mobilizing the people on a very wide scale on the question of untouchability. Of course, the problem of caste inequality, oppression and degradation was very deep-seated and complex, and temple entry alone could not solve it. But Satyagrahas like those of Vaikom and Guruvayur and the movements around them did make a massive contribution in this respect.

As **E.M.S. Namboodiripad** was to write years later: "Guruvayur Temple Satyagraha was an event that thrilled thousands of young men like me and gave inspiration to a vast majority of the people to fight for their legitimate rights with self-respect. It was the very same youth who gave this bold lead, who subsequently became founder leaders of the worker-peasant organizations that were free from the malice of religious or communal considerations."

### **DRAWBACKS OF THE MOVEMENT**

The main weakness of the temple entry movement and the Gandhian or nationalist approach in fighting caste oppression was that even while amusing the people against untouchability they lacked a strategy for ending the caste system itself. The force of the national movement in this direction was to find its expression in the Constitution of independent India which abolished caste inequality, outlawed untouchability and guaranteed social equality to all citizens irrespective of their caste. Its weakness has found expression in the growth of casteism and the continuous existence in practice of oppression and discrimination against the lower castes in post-1947 India.



### Famous Personalities Related To The Movement

**E.V. Ramaswami Naicker:** E.V. Ramaswami Naicker was a prominent social reformer of India in the 20th century. He was born on 28 September 1879 at Erode in Coimbatore District in Tamil Nadu. He came from a prosperous business family in that district. But he did not have any formal education. EVR held very strong views against four-fold division of caste hierarchy in Indian society. He joined the Congress for its lofty ideals and goals, one of which was the abolition of untouchability. **His fight against it at Vaikom** was by itself a vigorous agitation which engaged the susceptibilities of Brahmins. Moreover, **the Justice Party's** formation was itself a revolt against Brahmins and Varnashrama dharma. In such a context, any attempt to reinforce such belief in Varnashrama dharma would be counterproductive in the Madras Presidency. He gave a concrete shape to his ideas on social reform by founding the **Suyamariyati iyakkam** otherwise known as **the Self-Respect Movement**. It was a reform movement dedicated to the goal of giving non-Brahmins a sense of pride based on their Dravidianist past.

**K. Kelappan (Kerala's Gandhi):** K. Kelappan was born in Calicut on 24th August 1889. He is famously known as **"Dakshin ka Gandhi"** or Kerala's Gandhi. He was a founding member and president of Nair Service Society, a reformer, freedom fighter, educationist and journalist. He fought for social reforms on one hand and the British on the other. As an activist **Koyapalli Kelappan** led the Indian National Congress in the state of Kerala. Due to his close association with Mahatma Gandhi, the people of Kerala came to know about Gandhian ideals essentially through his personality. Hence, he came to be known as Kerala's Gandhi. He worked hard for the upliftment of Harijans and abolition of untouchability. **He was the editor of Mathrubhumi in 1929 and 1936. He also became the editor of Samadarshi in 1954.**

**A.K. Gopalan:** A.K. Gopalan was born in July 1902 at Mavilayi in Chirakkal taluk (Kannur) in North Malabar. He was a school teacher by profession. In 1930, **he participated in Salt-Satyagraha at Payyannur**. A.K. Gopalan was the leader of the Satyagrahis who received the Salt March at Payyannar from Kozhikode. He joined Guruvayur Satyagraha and he was the captain of the propagation march of Guruvayur under the initiative of KPCC. He was arrested and imprisoned in jail when he participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. In the jail, he organized workers and started a trade union. He organized a March from Kannur to Madras in 1936. **He played an important role in the formation of Indian Coffee House**, a worker cooperative initiative by organizing the thrown-out employees of Coffee Houses of Coffee Board to establish ICHs in late 1950s.

**P. Krishna Pillai:** Known to the masses simply as **Sakhavu (comrade)**, **P. Krishna Pillai was 'Kerala's first communist'**, home-grown, impishly bold and acutely sensitive to injustice, a product of the very movement he had helped fashion during a short, exceptionally dedicated life of 42 years. His first revolutionary act of defiance shot him into the limelight when a group of Congress leaders **defied the salt law on the beaches of feudal Malabar**. Krishna Pillai was perhaps the most familiar face in the homes of the labourers and peasants of Kerala, a leader known for his courage and dynamism, humaneness and uncompromising stand against exploitation and oppression.

**T.K. Madhavan:** He was an Indian social reformer, journalist and revolutionary, who was involved with the **Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP)** Yogam. He hailed from Kerala and led the struggle against untouchability which was known as Vaikom Satyagraha. In 1917, **Madhavan took over the daily newspaper, Deshabhimani**. He was involved in the Temple Entry Movement, which fought for the entry of oppressed and low-caste communities to the temples of Kerala. He fought for the right of temple entry for all. In 1918, Madhavan was elected to the Sree Moolam Praja Sabha, a legislative council of Travancore. In 1924, **Vaikom Satyagraha** started under the leadership of T.K. Madhavan, K. Kelappan to get the right of oppressed class of people to travel through the road in front of Vaikom Sree Mahadeva temple.



After **withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement** and Gandhi's arrest (March 1922), there was disintegration, disorganization, and demoralization among national leaders. At this time, debate started among Congressmen on what to do during the transition period, i.e., the passive phase of the movement. This led to emergence of **newer forms of resistance and political approaches** eventually leading to **branching within the Indian National Congress**. Hence, the Indian National Congress was **divided into two ideologies-** the **Swarajist and the No Changer**.

## SWARAJISTS

These were the group of those who **advocated for inclusion in legislative council** i.e. they put forward the idea of Council-Entry to wreck the reforms from within. Swarajists were also known as Pro- changers.

It was led **by C R Das, Motilal Nehru, and Ajmal Khan**. This proposal attracted several congressmen but it was opposed by orthodox Gandhians led by **Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad and Vallabhbhai Patel**.

### Objectives of Swarajists include

- Wanted to **"end or mend"** the legislative council.
- Expose the fundamental flaws of the legislative assemblies.
- If the government did not respond to the nationalists' demands, then they would obstruct the working of the legislative councils.

## NO CHANGERS

The 'No-changers' were those who **opposed entry to the legislative council**. This group was led by **Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, and M.A. Ansari**. They **advocated for a focus on constructive work** while **maintaining the boycott and noncooperation** with the British government. They also advocated for the quiet resumption of the **suspended civil disobedience programme**.

## FORMATION OF CONGRESS-KHILAFAT SWARAJYA PARTY

In the 1922 **Gaya session of the Congress**, **C R Das** (presiding over the session) moved a proposal to enter the legislatures. However, another section of the Congress i.e., no changers (headed by Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari) opposed the proposal of legislative council entry. In the end, the proposal of C R Das was defeated in the Gaya session.

**C R Das and Motilal Nehru resigned from their respective offices in the Congress and announced the formation of Congress-Khilafat Swarajya Party** or simply **Swarajist Party**. The President of the Swarajist Party was C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru were one of the secretaries.

### Swarajists' Arguments For Council Entry

The Swarajists had their reasons for advocating entry into the councils. They were as follows:

- **Fill in the temporary political void:** During a political vacuum, council work would serve to enthuse the masses and **keep morale high**.
- Entry of nationalist leaders in the legislative council would **deter the government from filling the councils with undesirable elements** who may be used to provide legitimacy to government measures.
- **Arena of political struggle:** There was no intention to use the councils as organs for gradual transformation of colonial rule.
  - ♦ **Electioneering and speeches in the councils** would provide fresh avenues for political agitation and propaganda
  - ♦ The **councils could be used as an arena of political struggle**.
- Entering the councils would not negate the **non-cooperation program**; rather, it would **continue the movement in a different way** by opening a new front.



## NO-CHANGERS' ARGUMENTS FOR DENYING COUNCIL ENTRY

The No-Changers argued that:

- Entry into legislative council or Parliamentary work would lead to:
  - ♦ Neglect of constructive work
  - ♦ Loss of revolutionary zeal
  - ♦ Political Corruption
- Constructive work would prepare everyone for the next phase of civil disobedience.

### Compromise between no changers and Swarajists

Swarajists and No Changers wanted to avoid a **1907-type split** (Surat Split). They were also in touch with Gandhi who was in jail. Both sides also realized the significance of putting up a united front to get a mass movement and force the government to introduce reforms. They also accepted the necessity of Gandhi's leadership at a united nationalist front. A **compromise was reached at a meeting in Delhi in September 1923.**

The **Swarajists were allowed to contest elections as a group within the Congress** and **Congress programme on constructive work was accepted.**

**The elections were to be held in November 1923.**

## SWARAJIST MANIFESTO FOR ELECTIONS

- **British guided by selfish Interest:** The guiding motive of the British in governing India lay in selfish interests of their own country. The reforms introduced by the British were only furthering the said interest of the British.
- **Real objective of the British was exploitation of resources:** Under the pretence of granting a responsible government, the true goal of the British was to continue exploitation of India's unlimited resources by keeping Indians permanently subservient to Britain.
- **Swarajists to present demand of self-government in councils:** The Swarajists would present the nationalist demand of self-government in councils.

- **Swarajist to obstruct the working of the council:** If the demand of self-government was rejected, they would **adopt a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction** within the councils to make governance through councils impossible.

## PROGRAMME OF SWARAJIST PARTY

### Inside the Council

The party decided that whenever possible it would:

- Refuse supplies and throw out budgets to force recognition of their rights;
- Throw out all proposals for legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposed to consolidate its powers;
- Move resolutions and introduce and support measures and bills necessary for the healthy growth of national life;
- Help the constructive programme of the Congress;
- Follow a definite economic policy to prevent the drain of public wealth from India by checking all activities leading to exploitation and to advance national, economic, industrial and commercial interest of the country;

## SWARAJIST ACTIVITY IN COUNCILS

Elections were held in November 1923. The Swarajists won 42 out of 141 elected seats and a **clear majority in the provincial assembly of Central Provinces**. In legislatures, in cooperation with the liberals and the independents like Jinnah and Malaviya, Swarajist won a majority.

### Major Achievements

- With coalition partners, **Swarajist out-voted the government several times**, even on matters relating to budgetary grants, and passed adjournment motions.
- They agitated **through powerful speeches on self-government, civil liberties and industrialization.**



- **Vithalbhai Patel** was elected speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1925.
- They defeated the **Public Safety Bill in 1928** which was aimed at empowering the Government to deport undesirable and subversive foreigners.
- By their activities, they filled the political vacuum at a time when the national movement was recouping its strength.
- They exposed the **hollowness of the Montford scheme**.
- They demonstrated that the councils could be used creatively.
- The year 1924-25 registered many victories for the Swarajists in the Legislative Assembly. Here, **they succeeded in throwing out the Budget forcing the Government** to rely on its power of certification **Swarajist resorted to adjournment motions and raised inconvenient questions** to expose the misdeeds of the alien government.

### REASONS FOR DECLINE OF SWARAJIST PARTY

There was a government crackdown on the Swarajists towards the end of 1924. Also, Hindu-Muslim tension, presence of reactionary elements of both the communities within the Swarajist party created a difficult situation.



**Rising Communal Politics:** The Hindus felt that their interests were not safe in the hands of the Swarajist party. Swarajist also lost the support of many Muslims when the party did not support **the tenants' cause against the zamindars in Bengal** (most of the tenants were Muslims). The activities of **the Hindu Mahasabha** also weakened the Swarajist position.

**Internal Divisions:** The Swaraj Party was divided into the **responsivists and the non-responsivists**. The responsivists (M M Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, N C Kelkar) advocated cooperation with the government and holding offices wherever possible, whereas the non-responsivists (Motilal Nehru) withdrew from legislatures in 1926.

**Lure of Office:** The Swarajist entered councils with the declared objective of stiff resistance to the government. However, the spirit of resistance soon gave way to cooperation. The **Responsivists among Swarajists—Lala Lajpat Rai, Madan Mohan Malaviya and N.C. Kelkar**—advocated cooperation with the government and holding office wherever possible.

#### Other Reasons for Decline:

- The **death of C R Das in 1925** weakened the Swarajist party.
- The Swarajists lacked a policy to coordinate their militancy inside legislatures with the mass struggle outside. They relied totally on newspaper reporting to communicate with the public.
- Inside the legislatures, the **Swarajists failed to pursue the policy of 'constant, continuous uniform obstruction'**. An obstructionist strategy in council had its limitations.
- Swarajist failed to resist the perks and privileges of power and office.



### Gandhi's Attitude on Swarajists

He was completely against the idea of entering the legislative council. He believed that entering the legislative council was against the principle of non-violence and non-cooperation. However, he moved towards a reconciliation with the Swarajists due to following reasons:

- Gandhi felt **public opposition to the programme of council entry** would be **counter-productive**.
- Gandhi was also convinced by the Swarajists performance in the November 1923 elections.
- When there was a government crackdown on Swarajists towards the end of 1924, Gandhiji expressed his solidarity with the Swarajists by surrendering to their wishes.

Thus, in the Belgaum **Congress session, 1924 (presided by Gandhi)**, Gandhi agreed that Swarajists would work in the councils as an integral part of the Congress.

### CONSTRUCTIVE WORKS BY NO-CHANGERS

The No-Changers devoted themselves to constructive work that connected them to the different sections of the masses.

- Ashrams sprang up, where young men and women worked among tribals and lower castes.

### Swarajist Leaders

**C.R. Das:** Chittaranjan Das popularly called **Deshbandhu** (Friend of the Nation), was an Indian freedom fighter, political activist and lawyer during the Indian independence movement and founder-leader of the Swaraj Party in undivided Bengal during the period of British colonial rule in India. **He brought out a newspaper called Forward and later changed its name to Liberty** as part of his support for various anti-British movements in India. Chittaranjan Das was actively involved in the activities of Anushilan Samiti. Chittaranjan Das successfully defended Aurobindo Ghosh on charges of involvement in the Alipore bomb case in 1909.

**Motilal Nehru:** Motilal Nehru was born on 6 May 1861. Motilal passed his bar examination in 1883 and began practicing law at Kanpur. Motilal Nehru twice served as President of the Congress Party, once in Amritsar (1919) and the second time in Calcutta (1928). Motilal later joined the Swaraj Party, which sought to enter

- The **use of Khadi and Charkha** was popularized.
- **National schools and colleges were set up** where students were trained in a non-colonial ideological framework. The lure of degrees and jobs took the students to official schools and colleges.
- Significant work was done for:
  - ♦ Hindu-Muslim unity
  - ♦ Removing untouchability
  - ♦ Boycott of foreign cloth and liquor
  - ♦ Flood relief
- The constructive workers served as the backbone of civil disobedience as active organisers.

### CRITICISM OF THE CONSTRUCTIVE WORK DONE BY NO-CHANGERS

- National education benefitted the urban and lower middle classes and the rich peasants only.
- The popularisation of khadi was an uphill task since it was costlier than the imported cloth.
- While campaigning about the social aspect of untouchability, no emphasis was laid on the economic **grievances of the landless and agricultural labourers comprising mostly the untouchables**.

Although the **Swarajists and the No-changers** worked in their separate ways, they **kept on best of terms with one another**. They were ready to unite together for a new political struggle whenever required.



the British-sponsored councils. Motilal had been elected to the United Provinces Legislative Council where he staged the first walk-out in protest of the rejection of a resolution he had proposed. **On 5 February 1919 he launched a new daily paper, The Independent**, as a counterpoint to 'The Leader', which was much too liberal for Motilal's standard and articulate thought in 1919. Motilal Nehru chaired the famous **Nehru Commission in 1928**, a counter to the all-British Simon Commission.

**Ajmal Khan:** Mohammad Ajmal Khan better known as **Hakim Ajmal Khan**, was a physician in Delhi, and one of the founders of the Jamia Millia Islamia University. **He was the only Muslim to chair a session of the Hindu Mahasabha.** Hakim Ajmal Khan changed from medicine to politics after he **started writing for the Urdu** weekly Akmal-ul-Akhbar launched by his family. Khan also headed the Muslim team who met the Viceroy of India in Shimla in 1906 and presented him with a memorandum written by the delegation. At the end of 1906, he actively participated at the Dhaka founding of the All India Muslim League. At a time when many Muslim leaders faced arrest, Khan approached Mahatma Gandhi for help in 1917, thereafter uniting with him and other Muslim leaders such as Maulana Azad, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jouhar and Maulana Shaukat Ali in the well-known Khilafat movement. Khan was also the sole person elected to the Presidency of the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League and the All India Khilafat Committee.

**N C Kelkar: Narasimha Chintaman Kelkar**, popularly known as **Sahityasamrat Tatyasaheb Kelkar** was a lawyer from Miraj as well as historian, writer on philosophical and political themes. He was born in Chitpavan Brahmin family. **He was a literary and political figure in Maharashtra, India, and also both editor and trustee of the newspaper Kesari.** He served as editor twice when Tilak was imprisoned in 1897 and 1908. He was associated with Shikshana Prasarak Mandali Pune, an education society in Pune established in 1904. He had also served as the president of Marathi Granth Sangrahalaya, Thane. After the death of Tilak in 1920, he became one of the foremost leaders of the Tilak faction in the Congress party. He was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly, the lower house of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1923 and served until 1929. He was president of Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha twice at Jabalpur in 1928 and Delhi at 1932.

**Vithal Bhai Patel: Vithalbhai Patel** was an Indian legislator and political leader, co-founder of the Swaraj Party and elder brother of Sardar Patel. Although never truly accepting the philosophy and leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Patel joined the Congress and the struggle for freedom. He had no regional base of support, yet he was an influential leader who expanded the struggle through fiery speeches and articles published. When Mahatma Gandhi aborted the struggle in 1922 following the Chauri Chaura incident, Patel left the Congress to form the Swaraj Party with Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru. **The Swaraj Party became the largest single party in the Central Legislature, and in most provincial legislative assemblies.** Vithalbhai Patel himself was elected President (the equivalent of Speaker) of India's Central Legislative Assembly, and helped put in place many legislative procedures that still exist today. Patel and others were important voices who rebelled against the leadership of Gandhiji when the nation anguished over the abortion of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

**Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy:** Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy was a Bengali barrister and politician in the Indian subcontinent. He held the positions of Prime Minister of Bengal (1946–1947) and Prime Minister of Pakistan (1956–1957). He joined the Indian independence movement during the 1920s as a trade union leader in Calcutta. He was initially associated with the Swaraj Party. He joined the **All India Muslim League** and became one of the leaders of the **Bengal Provincial Muslim League (BPML)**. Suhrawardy was elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1937. In 1946, Suhrawardy led the BPML to decisively win the provincial general election. He served as Bengal's last premier until the Partition of India. His premiership was notable for his proposal to create a Free State of Bengal and failing to prevent the Great Calcutta Killings.

**Srinivasa Iyengar:** Srinivasa Iyengar, was an Indian lawyer, freedom-fighter and politician from the Indian



National Congress. Iyengar was the Advocate-General of Madras Presidency from 1916 to 1920. He also served as a member of the bar council from 1912 to 1920, the law member of Madras Presidency from 1916 to 1920 and as the president of the Madras province Swarajya Party faction of the Indian National Congress from 1923 to 1930. Srinivasa Iyengar was the son-in-law of renowned lawyer and first Indian Advocate-general of Madras, Sir Vembaukum Bhashyam Aiyangar. Iyengar's followers called him the Lion of the South. Srinivasa Iyengar remains the youngest lawyer from the Madras bar to be made Advocate-General. Srinivasa Iyengar's 1939 book on "Mayne's Hindu laws" is a much-acclaimed and well-read book. Iyengar presided over the 1920 Madras Provincial Conference held at Tinnevely. **On 30 August 1928, Jawaharlal Nehru, Srinivasa Iyengar and Subhas Chandra Bose formed the Indian Independence League.** This league declared purna Swaraj or complete independence from British rule as its ultimate goal and not dominion status. Srinivasa Iyengar was elected President of the league with Nehru and Bose as its secretaries. When the All-Parties Report (known as the Nehru Report) was published in 1928 outlining a constitution for India in terms of Dominion status, Srinivasa Iyengar organized the Independence League with himself as president and Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose as leading members.

### Leaders Associated with no Changers

**Rajendra Prasad:** Rajendra Prasad was an Indian politician, lawyer, Indian independence activist, journalist & scholar who served as the first president of Republic of India from 1950 to 1962. A devoted student as well as a public activist, he was an active member of The Dawn Society. It was due to his sense of duty towards his family and education that he refused to join Servants of India Society. He joined the Indian National Congress during the Indian Independence Movement and became a major leader from the region of Bihar and Maharashtra. Prasad's first association with Indian National Congress was during 1906 annual session organized in Calcutta, where he participated as a volunteer. **He wrote articles for revolutionary publications, 'Searchlight' and 'the Dosh' and collected funds for these papers.** He was elected as the President of the Indian National Congress during the Bombay session in October 1934. He again became the president when Subhash Chandra Bose resigned in 1939. Two and a half years after independence, on 26 January 1950, the Constitution of independent India was ratified and he was elected as the first President of India.

**Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel:** Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel commonly known as **Sardar**, was an Indian lawyer, influential political leader, barrister and statesman who served as the **first Deputy Prime Minister of India and first Home Minister of India from 1947 to 1950.** He is also called the "**Unifier of India**", one of Mahatma Gandhi's earliest political lieutenants. He organized peasants from Kheda, Borsad, and Bardoli in Gujarat in non-violent civil disobedience against the British Raj, becoming one of the most influential leaders in Gujarat. He was appointed as the 49th President of Indian National Congress, organizing the party for elections in 1934 and 1937 while promoting the Quit India Movement. In the Congress, he was a resolute supporter of Gandhi against his Swarajists critics. Patel was elected Ahmedabad's municipal president in 1922, 1924, and 1927. During his terms, he oversaw improvements in infrastructure: the supply of electricity was increased, drainage and sanitation systems were extended throughout the city. When Gandhi was in prison, Patel was asked by Members of Congress to lead the satyagraha in Nagpur in 1923 against a law banning the raising of the Indian flag. **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day)** is introduced with the intent to pay tribute to Patel, who was instrumental in keeping India united.

**C. Rajagopalachari:** Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, popularly known as **Rajaji or C.R.**, was an Indian statesman, writer, lawyer, and independence activist. Rajagopalachari was the last Governor-General of India, as India became a republic in 1950. He was also the first Indian-born governor-general, as all previous holders of the post were British nationals. He also served as leader of the Indian National Congress, Premier of the Madras Presidency, Governor of West Bengal, Minister for Home Affairs of the Indian Union and Chief Minister of



Madras state. **Rajagopalachari founded the Swatantra Party** and was one of the first recipients of India's highest civilian award, the **Bharat Ratna**. Rajagopalachari made lasting contributions to Indian English literature and is also credited with the composition of the song **Kurai Onrum Illai** set to Carnatic music. When the Indian National Congress split in 1923, Rajagopalachari was a member of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee. He was also involved in the Vaikom Satyagraha movement against untouchability during 1924-25. **Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari**: Ansari obtained a medical degree from the Madras Medical College and went to England on scholarship studies. Dr. Ansari became involved in the Indian Independence Movement during his stay in England. He moved back to Delhi and joined both the Indian Congress and the Muslim League. He played an important role in the negotiation of the 1916 Lucknow Pact and served as the Muslim League's president in 1918 and 1920. He was an outspoken supporter of the Khilafat movement, and led the Indian medical mission to treat the wounded Turkish soldiers during the Balkan Wars. **He became the President of the Indian National Congress in 1927** on the invitation of Mahatma Gandhi. He spent all of his wealth for the Indian National Congress activities, which left him almost bankrupt. He spent his later life in writing and developing the Jamia Millia Islamia.

### Responsivists Leaders

**M.M. Malviya**: Madan Mohan Malaviya was an Indian scholar, educational reformer and politician notable for his role in the Indian independence movement. He was president of the Indian National Congress four times and the founder of Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha. He was addressed as Pandit, a title of respect, and also as Mahamana (Great Soul). Malaviya was one of the founders of the Bharat Scouts and Guides. **He founded a highly influential English newspaper, The Leader, in 1919**, published from Allahabad. He was also the Chairman of Hindustan Times from 1924 to 1946. His efforts resulted in the launch of its Hindi edition named Hindustan Dainik in 1936. **Malaviya started his journalistic career as Editor of the Hindi daily Hindustan in 1887**. Raja Rampal Singh of Kalakankar, impressed by the speech and personality of Malaviya during the second Congress Session in Calcutta held in 1886, requested him to assume this position.

Malaviya was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian distinction. In 1910, Malaviya started the Hindi paper 'Maryada'. **The slogan "Satyameva Jayate" (Truth alone triumphs) is also a legacy of Malaviya**. Presiding over the Indian National Congress session of 1918 at Delhi, he declared that this phrase from the Mundaka Upanishad should be the slogan for the nation.

**Lala Lajpat Rai**: Lala Lajpat Rai was an Indian author, freedom fighter, and politician. He played a vital role in the Indian Independence movement. He was popularly known as Punjab Kesari. He was one of the three members of the Lal Bal Pal trimurti. He was also associated with activities of Punjab National Bank and Lakshmi Insurance Company in their early stages in 1894. While in the United States he had **founded the Indian Home Rule League in New York City and a monthly journal, the Young India and Hindustan Information Services Association**. He was elected President of the Indian National Congress in the Calcutta Special Session of 1920. In 1921, he **founded Servants of the People Society**, a non-profit welfare organization. Lala Lajpat Rai approved that the lower caste should be allowed to read and recite the mantras. He believed that everyone should be allowed to read and learn from the Vedas.

**M. R. Jayakar**: Mukund Ramrao Jayakar was the **first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Poona**. He was a lawyer, scholar and politician. He was a prominent freedom fighter. Jayakar was born in a Marathi Pathare Prabhu family. Jayakar studied LL.B. in Bombay in 1902 and became a barrister in 1905 at London. In 1905 he was enrolled as advocate of the Bombay High Court. **He was Director of The Bombay Chronicle** along with Jinnah. He was a member of the Bombay Legislative Council during 1923-1925, and a leader of the Swaraj Party. He also became a member of the Central Legislative Assembly. In 1937 he became Judge of the Federal Court of India at Delhi. In December 1946, he **joined the Constituent Assembly of India**. He was



also the chairman of the Indian Road. Development Committee, formed in 1927 to report recommendations regarding highway development. He was a member of the Hindu Mahasabha. He took part in the **All Parties Conference in 1928**, and was pivotal in denying demands of the Muslim League put forward by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He was also the **Chairman of the Advisory Board of Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute**.

## EMERGENCE OF NEW FORCES

During the 1920s, there was an international influence on Indian political thinkers. This period saw the overwhelming participation of Indian masses in the national movement. Some of the new forces to emerge during the 1920s were as follows:

### SPREAD OF MARXIST AND SOCIALIST IDEAS

Ideas of **Marx and Socialist thinkers** inspired many groups to come into existence as **socialists and communists**. These ideas also resulted in the rise of **a left wing within the Congress, represented by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose**.

Many younger nationalists were inspired by the Soviet Revolution and dissatisfied with Gandhian ideas and political programmes. They began advocating radical solutions for the country's economic, political, and social ills. The younger nationalist:

- Were critical of both Swarajists and No-Changers
- Advocated a more consistent anti-imperialist line in the form of a **slogan for purna swaraj**
- Stressed the need to combine nationalism and anti-imperialism with social justice and simultaneously raised the question of internal class oppression by capitalists and landlords

#### Event associated with socialists and communists

- **Communist Party of India:** In 1921, Communist Party of India was formed in Tashkent by **M.N. Roy, Abani Mukherjee** and others.

#### Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case

Kanpur Conspiracy Case was against the communist leaders which were abhorred by the British Government. Some newly turned communists named M N Roy, Muzaffar Ahmed, S A Dange, Shaukat Usmani, Nalini Gupta, Ghulam

Hussain conspired against the Government and hence were caught. They were charged for "depriving the King Emperor of his sovereignty of British India, by complete separation of India from imperialistic Britain by a violent revolution."

- **Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case:** In 1924, many communists—S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, Shaukat Usmani, Nalini Gupta—were jailed in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case.
- **Indian Communist Conference:** In 1925, the **Indian Communist Conference at Kanpur formalised the foundation of the CPI**.
- **Meerut conspiracy case:** In 1929, **31 leading communists**, trade unionists and left-wing leaders were **arrested**. They were tried at Meerut in the famous Meerut conspiracy case.

### ACTIVISM OF INDIAN YOUTH

**Students' leagues were being established** and students' conferences were being held in almost every part of India. **All Bengal Students' Conference** was held in 1928. Jawaharlal Nehru presided over the All Bengal Students' Conference.

### PEASANTS' AGITATIONS

- **Peasant agitations in the United Provinces** demanded revision of tenancy laws, lower rents, protection from eviction, and debt relief.
- **Peasant uprisings occurred** in the Andhra Rampa region, Rajasthan, and the ryotwari areas of Bombay and Madras.
- **Vallabhbhai Patel** led the Bardoli Satyagraha in Gujarat (1928).

### GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONISM

The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), founded in 1920, led the trade union movement.



Its first president was Lala Lajpat Rai, and its first general secretary was Dewan Chaman Lal. Tilak was also associated with AITUC. During the 1920s, **major strikes occurred at Kharagpur Railway Workshops, Tata Iron and Steel Works (Jamshedpur), Bombay Textile Mills, and Buckingham Carnatic Mills.** In 1923, the first May Day was celebrated in India in Madras.

### CASTE MOVEMENTS

The various contradictions of Indian society, as in previous periods, found expression in caste associations and movements. These movements could be divisive, conservative, or potentially radical, and included:

- Justice Party (Madras)
- Self-respect movement (1925) under "Periyar"—E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker (Madras)
- Satyashodhak activists in Satara (Maharashtra)
- Bhaskar Rao Jadhav (Maharashtra)
- Mahars under Ambedkar (Maharashtra)
- Kerala's radical Ezhavas are led by K. Aiyappan and C. Kesavan
- Yadavs in Bihar seek social advancement
- Unionist Party led by Fazl-i-Hussain (Punjab)

### REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY DURING THE 1920S

When Gandhiji launched the Non-Cooperation Movement, many revolutionary groups either agreed to join the non-cooperation programme or suspended their activities to give the non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement a chance. However, **after the sudden withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, revolutionaries began to question the basic strategy of nationalist leadership and its emphasis on non-violent movement. They began to look for alternatives.**

The revolutionaries were not attracted to the parliamentary work of the Swarajists or to constructive work of the No-changers. So, they

were drawn to the idea that violent methods alone would free India. Thus, revolutionary activity was revived in India.

### REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES

#### Punjab-United Provinces-Bihar

**Formation of Hindustan Republican Association/Army (HRA):** The HRA was founded in October 1924 in Kanpur by **Ramprasad Bismil, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee and Sachin Sanyal.** HRA dominated revolutionary activities in Punjab-United Provinces-Bihar. Its aims were to organise an armed revolution to overthrow the colonial government and to establish the **Federal Republic of United States of India** whose basic principle would be adult franchise.

#### Kakori Robbery (August 1925)

The most important action of the HRA was the Kakori robbery. **It is a train robbery** that occurred near Lucknow. The revolutionaries boarded the 8-Down train in Kakori, a remote village near Lucknow, and stole the train's official railway cash.

**The goals of this robbery were to steal money** from the British administration to use it to fund the HRA and obtain public attention by promoting a favourable image of the HRA among Indians. **At the end** many revolutionaries were arrested. 7 were imprisoned, four were sentenced to life in prison, and **four were hanged: Bismil, Ashfaqullah, Roshan Singh, and Rajendra Lahiri.**

#### Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (Army)

In 1928, all the major revolutionaries of northern young India met at **Feroz Shah Kotla** Ground at Delhi on 9 and 10 September 1928. They created a new collective leadership, adopted socialism as their official goal and changed the name of the party to the **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (Army).**

The name of HRA was changed under the leadership of Chandra Shekhar Azad. The participants also included Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev,



Bhagwaticharan Vohra from Punjab and Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Shiv Verma and Jaidev Kapur from the United Provinces. The HSRA worked under a collective leadership and adopted socialism as its official goal.

### Saunders' Murder

In October 1928, **Lala Lajpat Rai** died as a result of lathi blows received during a **lathi-charge on an anti-Simon Commission procession**. As a result, the revolutionaries took to individual assassination. **Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru shot Saunders to death** (the police official responsible for the lathicharge in Lahore).

The death of Lala Lajpat Rai, led to change in the objective of HSRA i.e. from collective leadership to individual assassinations.

**The assassination of Saunders** was justified with these words: "The murder of a leader respected by millions of people at the unworthy hands of an ordinary police officer...was an insult to the nation. It was the bounden duty of young men of India to efface it... We regret having had to kill a person but he was part and parcel of that inhuman and unjust order which has to be destroyed."

### Bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly

The HSRA leadership decided to let the people know about its changed objectives and the need for a revolution by the masses. **Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt** were asked to throw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929 to **protest against the passage of the Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Bill**. The Bill aimed at curtailing civil liberties of citizens in general and workers in particular.

The **objective of throwing the bomb was to get arrested** and to use the **trial court as a forum** for propaganda so that people would become familiar with HSRA's movement and ideology. The bombs were deliberately made harmless and were aimed at making 'the deaf hear' (British hear).

### Blowing up Viceroy Irwin's train

Chandra Shekhar Azad was involved in a bid to blow up Viceroy Irwin's train near Delhi in December 1929.

### GOVERNMENT'S ACTION AGAINST THE REVOLUTIONARIES

**Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru** were tried in the Lahore conspiracy case. Chandra Shekhar Azad died in a police encounter in a park in Allahabad in February 1931. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged on March 23, 1931.

### BENGAL

After C R Das's death (1925), the Bengal Congress broke up into two factions. **One was led by J.M. Sengupta** (Anushilan group joined forces with him) and the **other was led by Subhash Chandra Bose** (Yugantar group backed him).

#### Actions of the reorganised groups

- **Calcutta:** Assassination attempt was made on the Calcutta Police Commissioner, **Charles Tegart** (another man named Day got killed) by **Gopinath Saha in 1924**.
  - ♦ **Government Action:** Many revolutionaries including Subhash Bose were arrested. Gopinath Saha was hanged.
- **Chittagong Armoury Raid (April 1930):** **Surya Sen** and his associates (**Anant Singh, Ganesh Ghosh and Lokenath Baul**) organised an armed rebellion to demonstrate that it was possible to challenge the mighty British Empire's armed might. They intended to **seize and supply arms to the revolutionaries by occupying two major armouries in Chittagong**. The raid was conducted under the banner of **Indian Republican Army—Chittagong Branch**.
 

The raid was quite successful. Surya Sen hoisted the national flag, saluted and proclaimed a provisional revolutionary government. In Chittagong, several villages were burned by the Government and punitive fines imposed on many others. Surya Sen was arrested in February 1933 and hanged in January 1934.



### Surya Sen

Surya Sen was born on March 22, 1894. He was fondly known as **Masterda**. He was from **Naopoara in Chittagong, (modern-day Bangladesh)**.

He joined the Anushilan Samiti, a revolutionary organisation in Bengal. In 1918, he started working as a math teacher at Chittagong. Surya Sen had **participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement**. He was the secretary of the Chittagong District Congress Committee. He used to say "Humanism is a special virtue of a revolutionary."

### Significant aspects of Revolutionary Movement in Bengal

- **Participation of young women:** There was a large-scale participation of young women especially under Surya Sen. These women provided shelter and carried messages and fought with guns in hand. **Prominent women revolutionaries** were **Pritilata Waddedar, Kalpana Dutt, Santi Ghosh, Suniti Chandheri and Bina Das**.

#### • Action taken:

- » Pritilata Waddedar died conducting a raid.
- » Kalpana Dutt was arrested and tried along with Surya Sen and given a life sentence.
- » Santi Ghosh and Suniti Chandheri shot dead the district magistrate (December 1931).
- » Bina Das who fired point blank at the governor while receiving her degree at the convocation (February 1932).

- **Emphasis on group action:** There was an emphasis on group action aimed at organs of the colonial State, instead of individual action. The objective was to set an example before the youth and to demoralise the bureaucracy.

- **Religion centric actions were avoided:** There were no more rituals like oath-taking and this facilitated participation by Muslims. Surya Sen

had Muslims such as Satar, Mir Ahmed, Fakir Ahmed Mian and Tunu Mian in his group.

In 1933, Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested for sedition and given two years' sentence because he had condemned imperialism and praised the heroism of the revolutionaries

### Drawbacks of Revolutionary movement in Bengal

- The movement retained some conservative elements.
- It failed to evolve broader socio-economic goals.
- Those working with Swarajists failed to support the cause of Muslim peasantry against zamindars in Bengal

## IDEOLOGICAL RETHINKING IN REVOLUTIONARIES

During their last days (late 1920s), the revolutionaries had started moving away from **individual heroic action and violence towards mass politics**. Let us understand this with the help of a few examples.

- **Ramprasad Bismil appealed to the youth to give up pistols and revolvers**, not to work in revolutionary conspiracies and instead work in an open movement. He urged the youth to strengthen Hindu-Muslim unity, unite all political groups under the leadership of the Congress. Bismil **affirmed faith in communism** and the principle that **"every human being has equal rights over the products of nature"**.
- Bhagat Singh moved away from a **belief in violent and individual heroic action** to Marxism. He also believed that a **popular broad-based movement alone could lead to a successful revolution**. **Naujawan Bharat Sabha (1926)** was established with the help of Bhagat Singh. It was an open wing of revolutionaries to carry out political work among the youth, peasants and workers, and it was to open branches in villages.



- ♦ **Rules of Naujawan Bharat Sabha:** Its members would have nothing to do with communal bodies and that they would propagate a general feeling of tolerance among people as religion was considered as a matter of personal belief.
- ♦ Bhagat and Sukhdev also organised the **Lahore Students' Union** for open, legal work among students.
- ♦ **Redefining Revolution:** Revolution was no longer equated with militancy and violence. Its objective was to be national liberation. For Bhagat Singh and his comrades, **revolution meant the development and organization of a mass movement** of the exploited and suppressed sections of society by the revolutionary intelligentsia.

#### Anushilan Samiti

**Anushilan Samiti** was one of the secret revolutionary organizations operating in Bengal in the first quarter of the 20th century. It was bent on overthrowing British colonial rule. The genesis of the revolutionary parties in Bengal in the first decade of the twentieth century can be traced to the formation of small, non-revolutionary youth clubs devoted to the three-fold aims of physical, mental, and moral development of the youth. Such a concept, developed by **Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda, and Aurobindo Ghosh**, is rooted in Shakta Hinduism. They urged the Hindus to become vigorous spiritually, physically and intellectually. To give effect to their thoughts, numerous youth clubs designated as Anushilan Samitis (Anushilan Samiti) in the rural and urban areas, were formed for undergoing mental and physical exercises. **Anushilan Samiti of Calcutta was founded by Barindrakumar Ghosh.** Pramatha Nath Mitra, **Sri Aurobindo, and Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das** were made the vice-presidents of the Samiti. **Noted revolutionary Suren Tagore (Rabindranath Tagore's nephew) became the treasurer. Jatindra Nath Mukherjee (Bagha Jatin), Bhupendra Nath Datta (Swami Vivekananda's brother), were the**

**other legendary nationalist leaders.** The Samiti was involved in a number of noted incidents of revolutionary attacks against British interests and administration in India, including early attempts to assassinate British Raj officials.

#### Yugantar

Jugantar or Yugantar was another secret revolutionary trend operating in Bengal for Indian independence. This association, like Anushilan Samiti, started in the guise of a suburban fitness club. Several Jugantar members were arrested, hanged, or deported for life to the Cellular Jail in Andaman and many of them joined the Communist Consolidation in the Cellular Jail. Some senior members of the group were sent abroad for political and military training. One of the first batches included Surendra Mohan Bose, Tarak Nath Das and Guran Ditt Kumar, who, since 1907, were extremely active among the Hindu and Sikh immigrants on the Western coast of North America. These units were to compose the future

#### Ghadar Party

In 1908, Jugantar chose to censure persons connected with the arrest and trial of revolutionaries involved in the Alipore Bomb Case. Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar were brought close by the joint leadership of Narendra Mohan Sen of Anushilan, represented by Rabindra Mohan Sen and Jadugopal Mukherjee of Jugantar, represented by Bhupendra Kumar Datta. However, this merger failed to revive the revolutionary activities up to the expected level.

#### Reasons Behind Individual Heroic Action of Bhagat Singh and His Comrades

- Sudden Suspension of NCM created a void and shattered the high hopes raised by the National Congress.
- Younger demographic started to question the efficacy of the national leadership and its emphasis on non - violence.



### Bhagat Singh on Revolution

"Revolution does not necessarily involve sanguinary strife, nor is there a place in it for personal vendetta. It is not the cult of bomb and pistol. By revolution we mean the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice, must change."

In **The Philosophy of the Bomb (written by Bhagwati Charan Vohra)** revolution is defined as 'Independence, social, political and economic' aimed at establishing 'a new order of society in which political and economic exploitation will be an impossibility'.

- They were neither influenced by the Parliamentary politics of the Swarajists nor the slow and undramatic constructive work of the no-changers.
- They therefore looked for alternatives, and were drawn to the idea that violent methods alone would free India.
- They were also influenced by several new social forces, namely:
  - ♦ The upsurge of working-class trade unionism after the World War. They could see the revolutionary potential of the new class and desired to harness it to the nationalist revolution.

- ♦ The second major influence was that of the Russian Revolution and the success of the young Socialist State in consolidating itself. The youthful revolutionaries were keen to learn from and take the help of the young Soviet State and its ruling **Bolshevik Party**.
- ♦ The third influence was that of the newly sprouting Communist groups with their emphasis on Marxism, Socialism and the proletariat.

- Revolutionary terrorism again became attractive. It is surprising to know that nearly all the major new leaders of the revolutionary terrorist politics, for example, **Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, Surya Sen, Jatin Das, Chandrasekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Shiv Varma, Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Jaidev Kapur**, had been enthusiastic participants in the non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement.
- The HSRA and its leadership was rapidly moving away from individual heroic action and assassination and towards mass politics, but death of **Lala Lajpat Rai** led them once again to take to individual assassination. The death of this great Punjabi leader, popularly known as **Sher-e-Punjab**, was seen by the romantic youthful leadership of the HSRA as a direct challenge.

### Assembly Bomb Case

On 8 April, 1929, revolutionaries **Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt** threw bombs at the Central Legislative Assembly at Delhi, which is known as the Central Assembly Bombing Case in Modern Indian History. As the President of the Central Assembly Vithalbhai Patel began to give his ruling on the **Trade Disputes Bill** at the Assembly, an explosion occurred and the hall began to be filled with smoke. There were slogans raised by young men from the Visitors' Gallery, stating '**Inquilab Zindabad**', 'Workers of the world unite', and 'Down with imperialism'. **The voices belonged to two young revolutionary freedom fighters Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt (also called B K Dutt)**. They also threw pamphlets from the Visitors' Galleries bearing the message — 'It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear', from Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. Both the men did not flee the scene or try to evade arrest after the act. They willingly faced arrest. Both of them were members of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. Their motive, as stated by them, was not to kill or injure people, but to 'make the deaf hear'. Bhagat Singh, who masterminded the attack, was inspired by the French anarchist **Auguste Vaillant** who had bombed the French Chamber of Deputies in the year 1893. Vaillant was executed for the act. **Conclusion:** The historian Bipan Chandra and others wrote in the book



"India's Struggle for Independence", about the significance of Bhagat Singh and his fellow comrades in the larger freedom movement. They mentioned that the revolutionaries "made a major advance in broadening the scope and definition of revolution. Revolution was no longer equated with mere militancy or violence. Its first objective was national liberation — the overthrow of imperialism.



The British were due to consider and announce another installment of constitutional reforms some time in 1929–30. In preparation, it announced the setting up of the Indian Statutory commission (known as '**Simon Commission**' after its chairman). Also, the **Government of India Act, 1919** had a provision that a commission would be appointed **ten years** from the date to study the progress of the government scheme and suggest new steps. Thus, the Simon Commission was appointed. However, it was appointed early from its due period.

### Simon Commission and its members

The Simon Commission was a group of seven Members of Parliament under the **chairmanship of Sir John Simon**. The Simon Commission was headed by Sir John Simon. Hence, the name was Simon Commission. The members of the Simon Commission were:

- Sir John Simon
- Clement Attlee
- Harry Levy-Lawson
- Edward Cadogan
- Vernon Hartshorn
- George Lane-Fox
- Donald Howard

**Note:** No Indian was Included in the Committee. Hence, this committee is often referred as an 'All White's Commission'

### REASONS BEHIND APPOINTMENT OF THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION

Although constitutional reforms were due only in 1929, the **British government appointed the commission in 1927**. The main reasons were:

- **Flaws in GoI 1919 Act: System of dyarchy** introduced by the act was opposed by Indian nationalist leaders, who demanded the administration to review the system.
- The **Indian people and leaders also wanted a reform to the dyarchy form of government**.
- The **Act had a provision** that a **commission would be appointed after ten years** to review the working and progress made on the measures taken through the 1919 Act.
- **Changing Political situation in Britain:** The Conservative government in Britain decided to form the Commission that would study the constitutional progress of India in the late 1920s. The reason behind forming the Commission earlier was the **Conservative government's fear of losing to the 'Labour Party' in the upcoming elections in Britain**.

- **Critique of the inability of Indians:** Lord Birkenhead (**Secretary of State for India**) was critical of the inability of Indians to formulate a concrete scheme of constitutional reforms. He was responsible for the appointment of the Simon Commission.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION

Its objective was to recommend to the British government **whether India was ready for further constitutional reforms** and along what lines.

### THE SIMON COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Simon Commission published a two-volume report in May 1930. Its recommendations were:

#### In Provinces

- **Abolition of dyarchy:** The Commission proposed the **abolition of dyarchy** and the establishment of **representative government in the provinces** which should be given **autonomy**.



- **Powers of the Governor:** The Governor **should have discretionary power** in relation to internal security and **administrative powers** to protect the different communities.
- **Increase in members in Provincial legislative council**

### At Centre

- **Power of Governor General:** The governor-general was to have complete power to appoint the members of the cabinet.
- **Parliamentary responsibility rejected:** The report rejected parliamentary responsibility at the centre.
- **Complete control over the high court:** The Government of India should have complete control over the high court.

### Other provisions of Simon Commission

- **Separate communal electorates should be retained** (and extended such electorates to other communities) but only until tensions between Hindus and Muslims had died down.
- There was to be **no universal franchise**.
- The commission **accepted the idea of federalism** but not in the near future.
- The commission suggested that a Consultative Council of Greater India should be established. It should include **representatives of both the British provinces as well as princely states**.
- The commission suggested that the **North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan** should get local legislatures.
- It recommended that **Sindh should be separated from Bombay** and **Burma should be separated from India** because it was not a natural part of the Indian subcontinent.
- It also suggested that the **Indian army should be Indianised** though British forces must be retained.

## Views of Different Sections on the Simon Commission

### Public Response

- The public Strongly opposed the commission. The commission was seen as racist (exclusion of Indians from the commission).
- Wherever the commission went, there were black flag demonstrations, hartals, and slogans of '**Simon Go Back**'. The movement demonstrated that the masses were gearing up for the next stage of the struggle.
- The new generation of youth played the most active part in the protest, **giving it a militant form**.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose** emerged as leaders of this new wave of youth and students.

### Congress Response

- The Congress opposed the commission.
- In December 1927, the **Congress session in Madras** decided to **boycott the commission** "at every stage and in every form". **M.A. Ansari** was presiding over the Congress session.
- Nehru also succeeded in getting a snap resolution passed at the Madras session, declaring **complete independence as the goal of the Congress**.

### Response by Other Groups and Parties

- The **Hindu Mahasabha** boycotted the Simon Commission.
- A faction of the **Muslim League under Jinnah** decided to support the Congress call for the boycott of the Simon Commission.
- Another faction of Muslim League under **Muhammad Shafi** supported the Simon Commission Report.
- The **Unionists Party in Punjab and the Justice Party in the south**, decided not to boycott the commission.



### Dr Ambedkar and the Simon Commission

Dr. Ambedkar demanded for the political protection of the depressed classes. He **asserted that the depressed classes as a minority needed greater political protection** than any other minority in British India because of its **educational backwardness, its economically poor condition and its social enslavement**. He **wanted reserved seats for the depressed classes** if a universal adult franchise was granted.

He also argued for a '**universal adult franchise**' for **both male and female alike**; for **provincial autonomy in the provinces** and for a dyarchy **at Centre**.

The report of the Simon Commission **granted reserved seats** to the depressed classes, but the condition was that candidates who would take part in the elections would have, first of all, to get their competence endorsed by the governor of the province. Ambedkar was displeased with this provision.

### POLICE REPRESSION

The Commission arrived in Lahore **on 30 October 1928**. Here, it was met by protesters waving black flags. The **protest was led by Lala Lajpat Rai**, who had moved a resolution against the Commission in the Legislative Assembly of Punjab. He was brutally lathi-charged. He died due to the injuries on November **17, 1928**.

### IMPACT OF APPOINTMENT OF SIMON COMMISSION

- It gave a stimulus to radical forces. The radical forces demanded not just **complete independence but major socio-economic reforms on socialist lines**.
- The demand of socio-economic reforms could be used as an issue on which Congress could once again **forge mass action in future**.
- Lord Birkenhead, the Conservative Secretary of State was critical of India's ability to formulate a concrete scheme of constitutional reforms.

However, this notion was challenged by Indian Leaders by finalizing a scheme which popularly came **to be known as the Nehru Report**.

### NEHRU REPORT (1928)

The popular resentment against Simon Commission made it apparent that the future constitution of India should be framed by the Indians themselves. **Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State**, had challenged the Indians asking them to frame a constitution acceptable to all political groups in the country. The Indian opinion on this vital issue was united.

The challenge given by Lord Birkenhead was taken up and meetings of the **All-Parties Conference** were held in February, May, and August 1928. The **All-Parties conference** appointed a subcommittee in 1928 under the chairmanship of **Motilal Nehru** to draft a Constitution. The **draft was called the Nehru Report**.

- The Nehru Report was the **first major attempt by the Indians to draft a constitutional framework** for the country. The committee included: **Tej Bahadur Sapru, Subhash Bose, M.S. Aney, Mangal Singh, Ali Imam, Shuab Qureshi and G.R. Pradhan**.

The report was finalized by August 1928. The recommendations of the Nehru Committee were unanimous except in one respect—while the majority favoured the **"dominion status"** as the basis of the Constitution, a section of it wanted **"complete independence"** as the basis with the majority section giving the latter section liberty of action.

### All-Parties Conference

At the **1927 Madras Congress Session**, a resolution boycotting the Simon Commission was passed. The Working Committee was authorized to prepare a Constitution for India in consultation with other organisations. Congress representatives as well as representatives of other organisations such as Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, etc. met at a



conference in February, 1928. This came to be known as the **All Parties Conference**. This Conference was presided over by **Dr. M.A. Ansari**.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NEHRU REPORT

- **Dominion status for India:** The report recommended the Dominion Status on lines of self-governing dominions as the form of government desired by India.
- **Rejection of separate electorates:** The report rejected the principle of separate communal electorates on which previous constitutional reforms were based. Instead, a demand for joint electorates with reservation of seats for Muslims at the Centre and in provinces where they were in minority in proportion to the Muslim population there with right to contest additional seats.
- **Fundamental Rights:** The Report also recommended universal adult suffrage, equal rights for women, freedom to form unions.
- **Responsible Government:** The Report recommended responsible government at the Centre and in provinces.
- The **Indian Parliament at the Centre consists of a 500-member House of Representatives** elected on the basis of adult suffrage. A 200-member Senate to be elected by provincial councils.
- The **House of Representatives to have a tenure of 5 years**.
- The **central government to be headed by a Governor-general**. He would be appointed by the British government but paid out of Indian revenues. He would act on the advice of the central executive council responsible to the Parliament.
- A **Supreme Court was to be established**.
- **Provincial councils to have a 5-year tenure**. It would be **headed by a governor** acting on the advice of the provincial executive council.

- Full protection of the cultural and religious interests of Muslims.
- **Complete dissociation of State from religion.**
- The report recommended **Linguistic provinces**.

## Nehru Report and the Princely States

A complex problem which confronted the Nehru Committee was regarding the status of princely states. In 1927 the people of Princely states formed the **State Peoples Conference** with a view to introduce self-governing institutions. This move threatened the interests of princes who sought the help of the British in this matter. The result was the appointment of a **Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler**. **Butler Committee** laid stress on preservation of princely states through **British Paramountcy**. The **Nehru Committee criticized the appointment of Butler Committee** and stated that the rights and obligations of Paramountcy should be transferred to the government of Commonwealth of India and conflicts between Commonwealth of India and Indian states were to be referred to the Supreme Court.

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## NEHRU REPORT AND THE COMMUNAL DILEMMA

Though the process of drafting a constitutional framework was begun enthusiastically and unitedly by political leaders, **communal differences crept in and the Nehru Report got involved in controversies** over the issue of communal representation.



The dilemma in which Motilal Nehru and other secular leaders found themselves was not easy to resolve: if they conceded more to Muslim communal opinion, then Hindu communalists would withdraw support and if they satisfied the latter, then Muslim leaders would be estranged. In the event that no further concessions were forthcoming, **Jinnah withdrew his support to the report and proposed his famous 'Fourteen Points'**, which were basically a reiteration of his objections to the Nehru Report.

### Compromise

- The Muslim League dissociated itself and **stuck to its demand for reservation of seats for Muslims**, especially in the central legislature and in Muslim majority provinces.
- The **concessions made in the Nehru Report to Hindu communalists** included the following:
  - ♦ **Joint electorates** were proposed everywhere but reservations for Muslims only were in minority.
- ♦ **Sindh to be detached from Bombay** only after dominion status was granted and subject to weightage given to Hindu minority in Sindh.
- ♦ Political structure proposed was **broadly unitary, as residual powers rested** with the centre.
- **Amendments Proposed by Jinnah:** At the All-Parties Conference held at Calcutta in December 1928 to consider the Nehru Report, Jinnah proposed three amendments to the report:
  - ♦ One-third representation of Muslims in the central legislature.
  - ♦ Reservation to Muslims in Bengal and Punjab legislatures proportionate to their population, till adult suffrage was established.
  - ♦ Residual powers to provinces.

These demands were not accommodated in the Nehru Report.

### Demand of Muslim League

In December 1927, a large number of Muslim leaders met in Delhi at the Muslim League session and evolved four proposals for their demands to be incorporated into the draft constitution. These proposals, which **were accepted by the Madras session of the Congress (December 1927)**, came to be known as the 'Delhi Proposals'.

- **Joint electorates in place of separate electorates** with reserved seats for Muslims;
- **One-third representation to Muslims in Central Legislative Assembly;**
- Representation to Muslims in Punjab and Bengal in proportion to their population;
- Formation of three new Muslim majority provinces—**Sindh, Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province.**

### Demand by Hindu Mahasabha

The **Hindu Mahasabha was opposed** to the proposals for creating new **Muslim-majority provinces and reservation of seats for Muslims majorities in Punjab and Bengal**. The Sabha demanded a strictly unitary structure. This attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha complicated matters.

### JINNAH'S FOURTEEN POINTS (1929)

When Jinnah's demands were not accommodated further, Jinnah withdrew his support to the Nehru report and proposed his famous '**Fourteen Points**'. This fourteen points were to become the basis of all future propaganda of the Muslim League. The fourteen points were as follows:

1. Federal Constitution with residual powers to provinces.
2. Provincial autonomy.
3. No constitutional amendment by the centre without the concurrence of the states constituting the Indian federation.
4. All legislatures and elected bodies to have adequate representation of Muslims in every province without reducing a majority of Muslims in a province to a minority or equality.



5. Adequate representation of Muslims in the services and in self-governing bodies.
6. **One-third of Muslim** representation in the central legislature.
7. In any cabinet at the centre or in the provinces, one-third to be Muslims.
8. Separate electorates.
9. No bill or resolution in any legislature to be passed if three-fourths of a minority community consider such a bill or resolution to be against their interests.
10. Any territorial redistribution not to affect the Muslim majority in Punjab, Bengal and NWFP.
11. Separation of Sindh from Bombay.
12. Constitutional reforms in the NWFP and Balochistan.
13. Full religious freedom to all communities.
14. Protection of Muslim rights in religion, culture, education and language.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Young leaders like **Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose** were not satisfied with the Dominion Status as recommended by the Nehru Report. Instead, **they demanded that the Congress adopt purna swaraj or complete independence as its goal. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose** jointly set up the **Independence for India League**.

The Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Sikh communalists were also unhappy about the Nehru Report. The Congress decided that if the Government did not accept a constitution based on Dominion Status by the end of the year the Congress would not only adopt complete independence as its goal, but it would also launch a **civil disobedience movement** to attain that goal.



**T**he Civil Disobedience Movement was a landmark movement in the Indian Nationalist Movement. It was launched in 1930, and it commenced with the famous Dandi March when Gandhi left the

**Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmedabad on foot.** Upon reaching Dandi, Gandhi broke the salt law. This led to the **Salt Satyagraha Movement** across the country.

### Significant Developments Before the Launch of Civil Disobedience Movement

1. **Calcutta Session of Congress:** It was at the Calcutta session of the Congress in December 1928 that the Nehru Report was approved but the younger elements led by Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Bose and Satyamurthy expressed their dissatisfaction with dominion status as the goal of Congress. Instead, they demanded that the Congress adopted purna swaraj or complete independence as its goal. The Congress decided that if the Government did not accept a constitution based on Dominion Status by the end of the year, the Congress would not only adopt complete independence as its goal, but it would also launch a civil disobedience movement to attain that goal.
2. **Political Activity during 1929:** The Congress Working Committee (CWC) organized a Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee to propagate an aggressive program of boycotting foreign cloth and public burning of foreign cloth. Gandhi initiated the campaign in March 1929 in Calcutta and was arrested. This was followed by bonfires of foreign cloth all over the country. Other developments that occurred during 1929, Meerut Conspiracy Case (March), bomb explosion in Central Legislative Assembly by Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt (April) and the coming to power of the minority Labour government led by Ramsay MacDonald in England in May. Wedgewood Benn became the Secretary of State for India.
3. **Irwin's Declaration (October 31, 1929):** The Irwin Declaration was a statement made by Lord Irwin, then Viceroy of India, on 31 October 1929 regarding the status of India in the British Empire. As per the declaration, the British government was to facilitate India in attaining dominion status in the future. The declaration failed to mention any timeline regarding the dominion status. Lord Irwin also promised a Round Table Conference.
4. **Delhi Manifesto (November, 1929):** On November 2, 1929, a conference of prominent national leaders issued a 'Delhi Manifesto' which put forward certain conditions for attending the Round Table Conferences:
  - The purpose of the Round Table Conference should not be to determine whether or when dominion status was to be given to India but to formulate a constitution for implementation of the dominion status.
  - The Congress should have majority representation at the conference;
  - There should be a general amnesty for political prisoners and a policy of conciliation.
 Gandhi along with Motilal Nehru and other political leaders met Lord Irwin in December 1929 and asked the viceroy (Lord Irwin) for assurance that the purpose of the round table conference was to draft a constitutional scheme for dominion status. Viceroy Irwin rejected the demands put forward in the Delhi Manifesto.
5. **Lahore Session (December, 1929) and Purna Swaraj:** Jawaharlal Nehru was nominated the president for the Lahore session of the Congress. He was nominated as president due to Gandhiji's support. The following major decisions were taken at the Lahore session:
  - The Round Table Conference was to be boycotted.
  - Complete independence was declared as the aim of the Congress.



- Congress Working Committee **was authorised to launch a programme of civil disobedience** including non-payment of taxes and all members of legislatures were asked to resign their seats.
  - January 26, 1930 was fixed as the **first Independence (Swarajya) Day**, to be celebrated everywhere.
6. **Flag was hoisted:** On December 31, 1929, at midnight on the **banks of River Ravi, the newly adopted tricolour flag of freedom was hoisted** by Jawaharlal Nehru amidst slogans of Inquilab Zindabad given by **Maulana Hasrat Mohani**.

## **GANDHI'S ELEVEN DEMANDS**

Gandhi presented the British government with **11 demands and gave a deadline of January 31, 1930 to accept or reject these demands. With no positive response from the government to these demands, Gandhi was given full authority to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement** at a time and place of his choice. The demands were as follows:

### **Issues of General Interest**

1. Reduce expenditure on Army and civil services by 50 per cent.
2. Introduce total prohibition.
3. Carry out reforms in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).
4. Change Arms Act allowing popular control of issue of firearms licenses.
5. Release political prisoners.
6. Accept Postal Reservation Bill.

#### • **Specific Bourgeois (Capitalist) Demands**

7. Reduce rupee-sterling exchange ratio to 1s 4d
8. Introduce textile protection.
9. Reserve coastal shipping for Indians.

#### • **Specific Peasant Demands**

10. Reduce land revenue by 50 per cent.
11. Abolish salt tax and the government's salt monopoly.

### **Result of the 11 Demands**

To many observers, this charter of demands (Gandhi's Eleven Demands) seemed a climb-down from Purna Swaraj. **Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in his**

**Autobiography:** "What was the point of making a list of our political and social reforms when we were talking in terms of Independence. Did Gandhiji mean the same thing when he used this term as we did or did we speak a different language?"

The Government response to Gandhiji's proposal was negative. **Still Gandhiji was hesitant. He wrote to the Viceroy:** But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and my letter makes no appeal to your ear, I shall proceed, with such co-workers of the Ashram as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the salt laws. I regard this tax to be the most ubiquitous of all from the poor man's standpoint.

- **The Viceroy gave a brief reply** in which he regretted that Gandhiji was "contemplating a course of action which was clearly bound to involve violation of law and danger to the public peace".
- Gandhiji in his rejoinder said, "On bended knees I asked for bread and received a stone instead. The English nation responds only to force and I am not surprised by the Viceregal reply".

Thus, with no positive response forthcoming from the government on these demands, the Congress Working Committee invested Gandhi with full powers to launch **the Civil Disobedience Movement** at a time and place of his choice. By February-end, Gandhi had **decided to make salt the central formula for the movement.**

### **DANDI MARCH (MARCH 12-APRIL 6, 1930)**

The **Civil Disobedience Movement began with Gandhiji's well-known Dandi March.** Gandhiji began the march from Sabarmati Ashram



in Ahmedabad on March 12, 1930. He was accompanied with 78 other Ashram members for Dandi (a village on India's western seacoast about 385 kilometers from Ahmedabad). **On April 6, 1930, they arrived in Dandi.** On reaching the coast at Dandi, the salt law was to be violated by collecting salt from the beach.

Gandhiji **broke the salt law by picking up a lump of salt at Dandi** on April 6. Gandhiji openly asked the people to make salt from sea water in their homes and violate the salt law.

#### **Why Was Salt Chosen as The Important Theme By Gandhiji?**

- Salt was chosen to symbolize the start of the civil disobedience movement because salt was deemed as something on which each Indian had the basic right.
- Salt tax was a universal grievance of the rural poor.
- Salt was a source of income for the poor like khadi.
- Salt offered to the urban population, the opportunity of a symbolic identification with mass suffering.
- Gandhi observed that "There is no other article like salt, outside water, by taxing which the government can reach the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless... it is the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise"

#### **Directions given by Gandhi for future action:**

- Wherever possible civil disobedience of the salt law should be started.
- Foreign liquor and cloth shops can be picketed.
- People can refuse to pay taxes if they have the requisite strength.
- Lawyers can give up practice.
- Public can boycott law courts by refraining from litigation.
- Government servants can resign from their posts.

- All the actions should be subject to one condition—**truth and non-violence as means to attain swaraj should be faithfully adhered to.**
- Local leaders should be obeyed after Gandhi's arrest.

#### **SPREAD OF SALT LAW DISOBEDIENCE**

After Gandhi's symbolic breaking of the salt laws at Dandi, **defiance of the laws spread throughout the country.**

**Tamil Nadu:** In April 1930, C. Rajagopalachari organised a march from **Thiruchirapalli to Vedaranniyam on the Tanjore coast** to break the salt law. The event was followed by widespread picketing of foreign cloth shops and the **anti-liquor campaign** in interior regions of Coimbatore, Madurai, Virdhanagar, etc.

**Malabar:** K. Kelappan, walked from **Calicut to Payannur** to break the salt law. He is also associated with **Vaikom Satyagraha**. P. Krishna Pillai, defended the national flag in the face of police lathi-charge on Calicut beach in November 1930.

**Andhra Region:** District salt marches were organised in east and west Godavari, Krishna and Guntur. A number of **sibirams (military style camps)** were set up to serve as the headquarters of the Salt Satyagraha. The **mass support like that in the non-cooperation movement (1921-22) was missing in Andhra.**

**Orissa:** Gopalbandhu Chaudhuri, a Gandhian leader led salt Satyagraha in the coastal regions of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri districts.

#### **Gopalbandhu Chaudhuri**

**Gopabandhu Choudhury** was born on 8 May 1895. He graduated from Presidency College, Calcutta in Mathematics in 1912. He got his Master's degree from the same college in 1914. In 1917 he got his preliminary law degree from Calcutta University. He **joined the freedom struggle in 1924. Since then,** he remained preoccupied with implementing **Gandhian programmes** like



spinning and weaving through Charkha. In 1925 he became the **secretary of the Odisha chapter of All India Charkha Sangha**.

#### Achievements

- In 1930 he spearheaded the **salt Satyagraha** by marching to Inchudi with his Ashram colleagues. Consequently he was arrested on 6 April 1930 with his colleagues. But he was released after a week and again marched to **Balasore**. But there he was arrested again and sentenced to two years imprisonment.
- After the Poona Pact of 1932, as Gandhiji's focus was shifted to the mass contact programme with Harijan, **Gopabandhu also shifted his focus to removal of untouchability and contacting Harijans** by visiting their villages to bring them into the mainstream of life.
- He also became a member **of All India Harijan Sevak Sangh** which played a major role in reaching out to the Harijans in Odisha during Gandhi's visit to Odisha in 1934.
- His most significant work was the establishment **of Seva Ghara** in the village Bagda in Bairi which became a great center for Gandhian constructive works. This **Seva Ghara of Bairi** was run on the same lines as the famous Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi in Wardha. Its main objectives were spinning, cultivation of cottage industries.
- From Bairi Sevaghara Gopabandhu edited '**Satyagrahi**', a magazine from 1939. It mostly published translations from Harijana.
- **Gopabandhu** established '**Utkala Navajibana Mandala**'. He was also a key associate of Sarvodaya Samaj and was the chief Secretary of **All India Sarvodaya Sangha**.

**Dharsana (Gujarat):** Sarojini Naidu, Imam Sahib and Manilal (Gandhi's son) led a **raid on the Dharasana Salt works**. The Peaceful Satyagrahis had to face brutal lathicharge from the Police.

#### Dharasana salt works

On May 21, Sarojini Naidu, Imam Saheb and Manilal along with a band of 2000 crowds marched towards the police cordon that had sealed off the Dharasana salt works. As they came closer, the **police rushed forward with their lathis** and set upon the non-resisting satyagrahis till they fell down. The injured would be carried away by their comrades on make-shift stretchers and another column would take their place, be beaten to pulp, and carried away. Crowd after crowd advanced in this way; after a while, instead of walking up to the cordon the men would sit down and wait for the police to blow. Not an arm was raised in defence.

This new form of salt Satyagraha was eagerly adopted by people in **Wadala (Bombay), Karnataka (Sanikatta Salt Works), Andhra, Midnapore, Balasore, Puri and Cuttack**.

**Webb Miller**, the **American journalist**, covered the Dharasana salt Satyagraha. His Account of the Dharasana Satyagraha was to carry the flavor of Indian nationalism to many distant lands. In his words about Dharsana, 'In eighteen years of my reporting in twenty countries, during which I have witnessed innumerable civil disturbances, riots, street fights and rebellions, I have never witnessed such harrowing scenes as at Dharasana.'

**Bihar: Champaran and Saran** were the first two districts to start salt Satyagraha. **In Patna, Nakhas Pond** was chosen as a site to make salt and break the salt law under **Ambika Kant Sinha**.

#### Other Forms of Non-Violent Protests during CDM

**Peshawar region:** In the Peshawar region of the Northwest Frontier Province, **Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan** raised the **Khudai Khidmatgars**, also known as the **Red Shirts**, a group of nonviolent revolutionaries. They played a key role in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Gaffar Khan is also called Badshah Khan and Frontier Gandhi. He had started the **first Pushto political monthly 'Pukhtoon'**.



On April 23, 1930, the **arrest of Congress leaders in the NWFP** led to mass demonstrations in Peshawar which was virtually in the hands of the crowds for more than a week till order was restored on May 4. This was followed by a reign of terror and martial law. It was **here that a section of Garhwal Rifles soldiers refused to fire on an unarmed crowd**. This upsurge in a province with 92 per cent Muslim population left the British government nervous.

**Bihar:** In landlocked Bihar, manufacture of salt on a large scale was not practicable and at most places it was a mere gesture. A very powerful **no chaukidari tax agitation replaced the salt Satyagraha** (owing to physical constraints in making salt). By **November 1930, sale of foreign cloth and liquor dramatically declined**, and administration collapsed in several parts like the Barhee region of Munger.

**Chhotanagpur:** Bonga Majhi and Somra Majhi led a movement in Hazaribagh which combined socio-religious reform in which followers were asked to **give up meat and liquor, and use khadi**. While most big zamindars remained loyal to the government, small landlords and better-off tenants participated in the movement.

**Sholapur:** Textile workers went on a strike and along with other residents burnt liquor shops and other symbols of government authority such as railway stations, police stations, municipal buildings, law courts, etc. The activists in Sholapur also established a **virtual parallel government**.

**Maharashtra, Karnataka, Central Provinces:** These areas saw **defiance of forest laws** such as grazing and timber restrictions and public sale of illegally acquired forest produce.

**United Provinces:** A **no-revenue campaign** was organised; a call was given to zamindars to refuse to pay revenue to the government. The campaign became virtually a **no-rent campaign as zamindars were mostly loyalists**.

**Manipur and Nagaland:** Rani Gaidinliu, a Naga spiritual leader raised the banner of revolt against foreign rule. She urged the people **not to pay taxes or work for the British**. She was finally captured in 1932 and later sentenced to life imprisonment. It was the Interim Government of India set up in 1946 that finally ordered her release from Tura jail.

**Assam:** A **powerful student-led agitation against the Cunningham Circular** was launched. The circular required students and their guardians to provide assurances of good behavior and banned students' participation in politics. **In December, Chandraprabha Saikiani** incited the aboriginal Kachari villages to break forest laws. It was, however, denied by the Assam Congress leadership.

**Bengal:** During the civil disobedience movement, Surya Sen's Chittagong revolt group carried out a raid on two armouries and declared the establishment of a **provisional government**. Midnapur, Arambagh and several rural areas in Bengal witnessed powerful movements developed **around salt Satyagraha and chaukidari tax**.

**Gujarat:** The impact of the Civil Disobedience movement was **felt in Kheda district, in Bardoli taluqa in Surat district, and in Jambusar** in Broach. Here, a **no-tax movement was organised** which included refusal to pay land revenue. Villagers, thousands in numbers, with family, cattle and household goods, crossed the border from British India into the neighbouring princely states such as Baroda and camped for months together in the open fields. Their houses were broken into, their belongings destroyed, their lands confiscated.

## FORMS OF MOBILIZATION IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

The movement popularized a **variety of new forms of mobilization such as:**

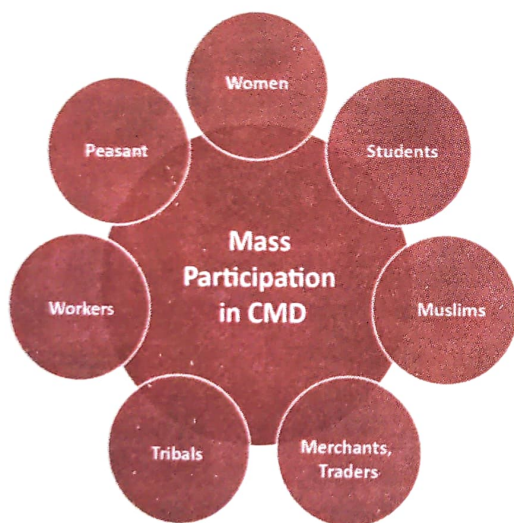
- **Prabhat pheris:** In this, crowds of men, women and children went around the villages and towns at dawn singing nationalist songs.
- **Patrikas:** Patrikas, or illegal news-sheets were used to defy the Press Acts.



- **Magic lanterns:** were used to take the nationalist message to the villages.
- **Tours by individual leaders:** Tours across the country were taken by individual leaders and workers, and by groups of men and women. They used to hold big and small public meetings.
- **Vanar senas and manjari sena:** Children were organized into vanar senas or monkey armies. At some place girls decided to have their own separate manjari sena or cat army.

### EXTENT OF MASS PARTICIPATION IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

Several sections of the population participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement.



- **Women:** For Indian women, the movement was the most liberating experience. They participated in picketing outside liquor shops, opium dens and shops selling foreign cloth.
- **Students:** Students and youth played significant roles in the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor.
- **Muslims:** As compared to 1920-22 Non-Cooperation Movement, the Muslim participation was very less. This was because of appeals by Muslim leaders to stay away from the movement and because of government encouragement to communal dissension.

In spite of that, some areas such as the NWFP saw good Muslim participation. Middle class Muslim participation was quite significant in Senhatta, Tripura, Gaibandha, Bagura and Noakhali. In Dacca, Muslim leaders, shopkeepers, lower class people and upper class women were active

- **Merchants and Petty Traders:** Traders' associations and commercial bodies were active in implementing the boycott, especially in Tamil Nadu and Punjab.
- **Tribals:** Tribals were active participants in Central Provinces, Maharashtra and Karnataka.
- **Workers:** The workers participated in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Sholapur, etc.
- **Peasant:** Peasants were active in the United Provinces, Bihar and Gujarat.

### GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE

The government during the 1930s, faced the classic dilemma of 'damned if you do, damned if you don't'. It meant that if force was applied, the Congress cried 'repression', and if little action was taken, the Congress cried 'victory'. However, **Gandhiji was arrested**. British government responded in various ways such as:

- **Curbed civil liberties:** ordinances curbing the civil liberties of the people were freely issued by the government. Provincial governments were given the **freedom to ban civil disobedience organizations**.
- **Lathi-charges and firing on unarmed crowds:** There were lathi-charges and firing on unarmed crowds, which resulted in several deaths and injuries. Thousands of satyagrahis were imprisoned.
- **Round table conference was announced:** In **July 1930**, Lord Irwin proposed a round table conference in July 1930 and reiterated the goal of dominion status. Lord Irwin also accepted the suggestion that **Tej Bahadur Sapru and M.R. Jayakar** be allowed to explore the possibility of peace between the Congress and the government.



## GANDHI-IRWIN PACT (1931)

A pact was signed between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin (the Viceroy of India) in **March 1931** which made the British Government concede some of the Gandhiji's demands. This pact is popularly called Gandhi-Irwin pact.

### Events leading to the Pact

**August 1930:** In **August 1930**, Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru were taken to **Yeravada Jail to meet Gandhiji** and discuss the possibility of a settlement. The Nehrus and Gandhi unequivocally reiterated the demands of:

- Right of secession from Britain
- Complete national government with control over defence and finance
- An independent tribunal to settle Britain's financial claims

**January 25, 1931:** On January 25, 1931, **Gandhiji and all other members of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) were released unconditionally.** The CWC authorized Gandhiji to initiate discussions with the viceroy Lord Irwin.

**February 1931:** A pact was **signed between the viceroy Lord Irwin** (representing the British Indian Government) and **Gandhiji** (representing the Indian people) in **Delhi** on February 14, 1931. This Delhi Pact is also known as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

### Irwin on behalf of the government agreed on:

- ♦ Immediate release of all political prisoners not convicted of violence.
- ♦ Remission of all fines not yet collected.
- ♦ Return of all lands not yet sold to third parties.
- ♦ Lenient treatment to those government servants who had resigned.
- ♦ Right to make salt in coastal villages for personal Consumption (not for sale).
- ♦ Right to peaceful and non-aggressive picketing.
- ♦ Withdrawal of emergency ordinances.

### Was the Gandhi-Irwin Pact a retreat in the Civil Disobedience Movement?

Gandhiji's decision to suspend the civil disobedience movement as agreed under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was **not a retreat or move backward trend**, because: mass movements are necessarily short-lived; capacity of the masses to make sacrifices, unlike that of the activists, is limited; and There were signs of exhaustion after September 1930, especially among shopkeepers and merchants, who had participated so enthusiastically.

- **The viceroy, however, turned down two of Gandhi's demands:**
  - ♦ Public inquiry into police excesses.
  - ♦ Commutation of Bhagat Singh and his comrades' death sentence to life sentence.
- **Gandhi on behalf of the Congress agreed to:**
  - ♦ Suspend the civil disobedience movement.
  - ♦ Participate in the next Round Table Conference.

## COMPARISON OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT TO NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

There were certain aspects in which the Civil Disobedience Movement differed from the Non-Cooperation Movement.

- **Objective:** The objective during the Civil Disobedience movement was **complete independence** and not just remedying two specific wrongs (Punjab and Khilafat) and a vaguely-worded swaraj.
- **Methods:** The methods involved **violation of laws from the very beginning and not just non-cooperation with foreign rule.**
- **Muslim participation:** Muslim participation was nowhere near that in the Non-Cooperation Movement level.
- **Labour upsurge:** No major labour upsurge coincided with the Civil Disobedience movement.



- **Imprisoned:** The number of those imprisoned was about three times more during the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- The Congress was organisationally stronger in Civil Disobedience than during the Non-cooperation movement.
- There was a decline in forms of protests involving the intelligentsia, such as lawyers giving up practice, students giving up government schools to join national schools and colleges.

### **IMPACT OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT**

- The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31, then, marked a critically important stage in the progress of the anti-imperialist struggle.
- The movement instilled **distrust in the British government** and laid the ground for the freedom struggle.
- The movement popularized **new methods of propaganda** such as the Prabhat, pheris, pamphlets, and so on.
- **Foreign imports of clothing and cigarettes** were reduced by half. Government revenues from land revenue and liquor excise were also reduced.
- **Elections to the Legislative Assembly** had been **effectively boycotted**.
- A vast **variety of social groups had been politicized** on the side of Indian nationalism. **For example:** urban classes like merchants and shopkeepers and students were more active in Tamil Nadu and Punjab, and in cities in general. Peasants had come to the forefront in Gujarat, U.P., Bengal, Andhra, and Bihar. Tribals were active in the Central Provinces, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Bengal.
- **Women and students participated** in large numbers in the movement, which was a liberating experience for Indian women.

### **DRAWBACKS OF THE MOVEMENT**

Muslims were less likely to participate as a result of communal leaders' advice and the government's

efforts to promote communalism as a counter-nationalism strategy. Except in Nagpur, industrial workers did not turn out in large numbers.

### **KARACHI CONGRESS SESSION-1931**

In March 1931, a **special session of the Congress was held at Karachi to endorse the Gandhi-Irwin Pact**.

#### **Congress Resolutions at Karachi**

- While disapproving of and dissociating itself from political violence, the Congress admired the 'bravery' and 'sacrifice' of the three martyrs (Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru)

#### **Black Flag Demonstration to Gandhi**

Six days before the Karachi session (which was held on March 29) Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were executed. **Throughout Gandhi's route to Karachi, he was greeted with black flag demonstrations by the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha**, in protest against his failure to secure commutation of the death sentence for Bhagat and his comrades.

- The Delhi Pact or Gandhi-Irwin Pact was endorsed.
- The goal of purna swaraj was reiterated. This was the **first time the Congress spelt out what swaraj would mean for the masses**—"in order to end exploitation of masses, political freedom must include economic freedom of starving millions".
- Two resolutions were adopted—one on Fundamental Rights and the other on the National Economic Programme. The **Resolution on Fundamental Rights guarantee:**
  - ♦ free speech and free press
  - ♦ right to form associations
  - ♦ right to assemble
  - ♦ universal adult franchise
  - ♦ equal legal rights irrespective of caste, creed and sex



- neutrality of state in religious matters
- free and compulsory primary education
- protection to culture, language, script of minorities and linguistic groups
- **The Resolution on National Economic Programme included:**
  - Substantial reduction in rent and revenue in the case of landholders and peasants
  - Exemption from rent for uneconomic holdings
  - Relief from agricultural indebtedness
  - Control of usury
  - Better conditions of work including a living wage,
  - Limited hours of work and protection of women workers in the industrial sector
  - Right to workers and peasants to form unions
  - State ownership and control of key industries, mines and means of transport

## THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCES

### FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The first Round Table Conference was held in London between November 1930 and January 1931. It was chaired by **Ramsay MacDonald**. This was the **first** conference arranged between the British and the Indians as equals.

**Outcome:** The outcome was not very satisfactory. The British government realized that the **participation of the Indian National Congress was necessary** in any discussion on the future of constitutional government in India.

#### Participants in 1st Round Table Conference

The Princely States, Muslim League, Justice Party, Hindu Mahasabha etc. attended it

The Congress and some prominent business leaders refused to attend it.

### 2ND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The **second Round Table Conference** was held in London **from September 7, 1931 to December 1, 1931**. At that time, Lord Willingdon was viceroy in India.

#### Issues

- The **British government claimed** that the **Congress did not represent the interests of all of India due** to the participation of a large number of groups.
- The session got **deadlocked on the question of the minorities**.
- Muslims, depressed classes, Christians and Anglo-Indians demanded separate electorates. All these came together in a 'Minorities' Pact'.

**Outcome:** The lack of agreement among the many delegate groups meant that no substantial results regarding India's constitutional future would come out of the conference. The session ended with MacDonald's announcement of:

- Two Muslim majority provinces—North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Sindh.
- The **setting up of an Indian Consultative Committee**.
- Setting up of three expert committees—finance, franchise and states.
- The prospect of a unilateral British Communal Award if Indians failed to agree.

The **government refused to concede the basic Indian demand of freedom**. Gandhiji returned to India and gave a call to resume the Civil Disobedience Movement.

#### Participants in 2nd Round Table Conference

- The **Indian National Congress nominated Gandhi** as its sole representative. A. Rangaswami Iyengar and Madan Mohan Malaviya were also there.
- The **Muslims** were represented by Aga Khan III, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, A.K. Fazlul Huq, Muhammad Iqbal,



Muhammad Shafi, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, Syed Ali Imam, Maulvi Muhammad Shafi Daudi, Raja Sher Muhammad Khan of Domeli, A.H. Ghuznavi, Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Sayed Muhammad Padshah Saheb Bahadur, Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Jamal Muhammad and Nawab Sahibzada Sayed Muhammad Mehr Shah.

- **Hindu groups** were represented by M.R. Jayakar, B.S. Moonje and Diwan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath.
- **The Liberals** were represented by J. N. Basu, C.Y. Chintamani, Tej Bahadur Sapru, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri and Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad.
- **The Justice Party** sent Raja of Bobbili, Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, Sir A.P. Patro and Bhaskarrao Vithojirao Jadhav.
- The **Depressed Classes** were represented by B.R. Ambedkar and Rettamalai Srinivasan.
- The **Sikhs** were represented by Sardar Ujjal Singh and Sardar Sampuran Singh.
- **The Parsis** were represented by Cowasji Jehangir, Homi Mody and Phiroze Sethna.
- **Indian Christians** were represented by Surendra Kumar Datta and A.T. Pannirselvam.
- **Industry** was represented by Ghanshyam Das Birla, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas and Maneckji Dadabhoy.
- **Labour** was represented by N. M. Joshi, B. Shiva Rao and V. V. Giri.
- **Indian women** were represented by Sarojini Naidu, Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz and Radhabai Subbarayan.
- **The universities** were represented by Syed Sultan Ahmed and Bisheshwar Dayal Seth.
- **Representatives of Burma and from the provinces of Sindh, Assam, Central Provinces and the NWFP** also attended.
- The **Government of India** was represented by C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, Narendra Nath Law and M. Ramachandra Rao.

### 3RD ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The third Round Table Conference was held between November 17, 1932 and December 24, 1932.

**Outcome:** The third RTC proved to be a setback, as nothing of importance was discussed, in the absence of political leaders and Maharajas.

#### Participants in 3rd Round Table Conference

- The Indian National Congress and the Labour Party decided not to attend it
- **Indian States were represented** by Akbar Hydari (Dewan of Hyderabad), Mirza Ismail (Dewan of Mysore), V.T. Krishnamachari (Dewan of Baroda), Wajahat Hussain (Jammu and Kashmir), Sir Sukhdeo Prasad (Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur), J.A. Surve (Kolhapur), Raja Oudh Narain Bisarya (Bhopal), Manubhai Mehta (Bikaner), etc.
- **British-Indian Representatives** were Aga Khan III, B.R. Ambedkar, Ramakrishna Ranga Rao of Bobbili, Sir Hubert Carr, Nanak Chand Pandit, A.H. Ghuznavi, Henry Gidney, Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Muhammad Iqbal, M.R. Jayakar, etc.

### CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE RESUMED

On the failure of the second Round Table Conference, the **Congress Working Committee** decided on December 29, 1931 to resume the civil disobedience movement. After the CWC decided to resume the civil disobedience movement, Viceroy Willingdon refused a meeting with Gandhiji on December 31. **On January 4, 1932, Gandhiji was arrested.**

#### Changed Government Attitude after Second RTC

There were three main considerations in British policy:

Gandhi would not be permitted to build up the tempo for a mass movement again.



Goodwill of the Congress was not required, but the confidence of those who supported the British against the Congress—government functionaries, loyalists, etc.—was very essential.

The **national movement would not be allowed** to consolidate itself in rural areas.

### GOVERNMENT ACTION

Series of repressive ordinances were issued which ushered in a virtual martial law. The Congress was declared as an illegal party by Viceroy Lord Willington and Congress organisations at all levels were banned. Arrests were made of activists, leaders, sympathisers and their properties were confiscated. Gandhi ashrams were occupied. The government paid no heed to the Delhi pact and started breaching the pact on various occasions.

### PEOPLE RESISTANCE TOWARDS THE OPPRESSION BY THE GOVERNMENT

People responded with anger. Though unprepared, the response was massive. Roughly 80,000 Satyagrahis were jailed and other forms of protest like **picketing of shops selling liquor and foreign cloth**, illegal gatherings, **non-violent demonstrations, and celebrations of national days** were observed. Symbolic hoistings of national flag, non-payment of chowkidar tax, salt Satyagraha, forest law violations and **installation of a secret radio transmitter near Bombay** were also observed. The second phase of the civil disobedience movement coincided with upsurges in two princely states—**Kashmir and Alwar**.

### Concluding Remarks

The second phase of the Civil Disobedience movement **could not be sustained for long** because Gandhiji and other leaders had no time to build up the tempo and the masses were not prepared. Finally in April 1934, Gandhi decided to withdraw the civil disobedience movement.

## COMMUNAL AWARD (1932)

The Communal Award was announced by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, on August 16, 1932. The Communal Award was **based on the findings of the Lothian Committee** (also called the Indian Franchise Committee). It **granted separate electorates** for **Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, depressed classes, and even to the Marathas** for some seats in Bombay.

### WHAT LED TO COMMUNAL AWARDS?

In the second round table conference, Ambedkar raised the issue of separate electorate for the depressed classes. Gandhiji, rejected Ambedkar's proposal. Gandhiji attempted to strike a deal with Muslims, promising to support their demands as long as the Muslims voted against separate electorates for the depressed classes. A **consensus on the minority representation could not be worked out among the Indian delegates**. Ramsay MacDonald, who had chaired the committee on minorities, offered to mediate on the condition that the other members of the committee supported his decision. And, the outcome of this mediation was the Communal Award.

### Main Provisions Of The Communal Award

- Separate electorates for Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, depressed classes, women, and even the Marathas.
- Same arrangement for the depressed classes was to be made for a **period of 20 years**.
- Distribution of seats on communal basis in the provincial legislatures.
- Doubling the seats of provincial legislatures.
- Finite proportions were given to the Muslims, wherever they were in minority.
- 3 per cent seats were to be reserved for women in all provinces, except in the North West Frontier Province.



- The depressed classes to be given the status of minority.
- The depressed classes were to get 'double vote',
  - ♦ through separate electorates
  - ♦ through general electorates.
- Allocations of seats were to be made for laborers, landlords, traders and industrialists.
- 7 seats were to be allocated for the Marathas in the province of Bombay.

### VIEWS ON COMMUNAL AWARDS

**Congress:** Congress viewed it as a manifestation of the **British policy of divide and rule**. The Congress was not in favour of challenging the Communal Award without the consent of the minorities. Thus, while **strongly disagreeing with the Communal Award, the Congress decided neither to accept it nor to reject it**

**Gandhiji:** He observed the Communal Award as an attack on Indian unity and nationalism. He thought it was harmful to both Hinduism and to the depressed classes since it provided no answer to the socially degraded position of the depressed classes. He demanded that depressed classes be elected through joint and if possible, a wider electorate through universal franchise. Also, he did not express any objection to the demand for a larger number of reserved seats. And to press his demands, **he went on an indefinite fast on September 20, 1932.**

### COMPROMISE AND POONA PACT

The Poona Pact was an agreement between **Mahatma Gandhi and B R Ambedkar signed in the Yerwada Central Jail, Poona on September 24th, 1932** on behalf of the depressed class for the reservation of the electoral seats in the Legislature of the British Government.

After Gandhi's announcement of indefinite fast, leaders like **B.R. Ambedkar, M.C. Rajah and Madan Mohan Malaviya** got together to work

out a compromise. The compromise is known as **Poona Pact**. The Poona Pact abandoned the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes. It was **signed by B.R. Ambedkar on behalf of the depressed classes on September 24, 1932.**

The **seats reserved for the depressed classes were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and to 18 percent of the total in the Central Legislature**. The Poona Pact was accepted by the government as an amendment to the Communal Award.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE POONA PACT

The Poona Pact was an emphatic acceptance by upper-class Hindus that the depressed classes constituted the **most discriminated sections** of Hindu society. It **was also conceded that something concrete had to be done to give them a political voice** as well as lift them from a backwardness they could not otherwise overcome. The **concessions agreed to in the Poona Pact were precursors to the world's largest affirmative programme** launched much later in independent India. A **number of measures were initiated** later to uplift Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, post-independence.

It **sealed Ambedkar as the official leader of depressed classes across India**. He made the entire country morally responsible for the uplift of the depressed classes. Most of all he succeeded in making the depressed classes a formidable political force for the first time in history.

### IMPACTS OF THE POONA PACT ON DEPRESSED CLASSES

- The **Pact made the depressed classes political tools** which could be used by the majoritarian caste Hindu organisations.
- It **subordinated the depressed classes into being part of the Hindu social order** by denying them a separate and distinct existence.
- The **Poona Pact perhaps put obstructions** in the way of an ideal society based on equality, liberty, fraternity and justice.



- By refusing to recognise the Dalits as a separate and distinct element in the national life, it pre-empted the **rights and safeguards for the Dalits in the Constitution of independent India**.

### Gandhi's Harijan Campaign and thoughts on Cast

Gandhi's Harijan campaign included a programme of internal reform by Harijans covering education, cleanliness, hygiene, giving up eating of beef and carrion and consumption of liquor, and removing untouchability among themselves.

#### Steps taken by him:

- **All India Anti-Untouchability League:** When Gandhi was in jail, he set up the **All India Anti-Untouchability League** in September 1932 and started the **weekly Harijan in January 1933**.
- He also set up **Harijan Sevak Sangh** in 1932, and propagated removal of untouchability in all its forms.
- **Undertook fasts:** He undertook two fasts—on May 8 and August 16, 1934—to convince his followers of the seriousness of his Harijan Campaign and its importance.
- **Conducted a Harijan tour:** After his release, he conducted a Harijan tour of the country in the period from November 1933 to July 1934. Throughout his Harijan tour Gandhi stressed on certain themes:
  - ♦ He called for **total eradication of untouchability** symbolised by his plea to throw open temples to the untouchables.
  - ♦ He **stressed the need for caste Hindus to do 'penance'** for untold miseries inflicted on Harijans. For this reason, he was not hostile to his critics such as Ambedkar. He said, "Hinduism dies if untouchability lives, untouchability has to die if Hinduism is to live."
  - ♦ His **entire campaign was based on principles of humanism and reason**. He said that the Shastras do not sanction untouchability, and if they did, they should be ignored as it was against human dignity.

Gandhi **was not in favour of mixing up the issue of removal of untouchability with that of inter-caste marriages and inter-dining** because he felt that such restrictions existed among caste Hindus and among Harijans themselves, and because the all-India campaign at the time was directed against disabilities specific to Harijans.

## GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1935

After holding three sessions of Round Table Conference in 1930, 1931 and 1932 respectively, their recommendations were embodied in a White Paper published in 1933. A Joint Select Committee was formed to analyse the recommendations and formulate a new Act for India, and that committee produced a draft Bill in February 1935 which was enforced as the Government of India Act of 1935 in July 1935.

### Provisions of the Act

**An All India Federation:** It was to comprise all British Indian provinces, all chief commissioner's provinces and the Indian states (princely states). The federation's formation was conditional on the fulfilment of:

- States with allotment of 52 seats in the proposed Council of States should agree to join the federation.
- Aggregate population of states in the above category should be 50 percent of the total population of all Indian states. Since these conditions were not fulfilled, the proposed federation never came up.

### Federal Level: Executive

- The governor-general was the pivot of the entire Constitution.
- Subjects were divided into reserved and transferred.
  - ♦ **Reserved subjects** were foreign affairs, defence, tribal areas and ecclesiastical affairs etc. They were to be exclusively administered by the governor-general on the advice of executive councillors.



- ♦ **Transferred subjects** included all other subjects. They were to be administered by the governor-general on the advice of ministers elected by the legislature.
- Governor-general could act in his individual judgement in the discharge of his special responsibilities for the security and tranquillity of India.

### Federal Level: Legislature

- The bicameral legislature was to have an upper house (Council of States) and a lower house (Federal Assembly).
  - ♦ The **Council of States** was to be a 260-member house, partly directly elected from British Indian provinces and partly (40 per cent) nominated by the princes.
  - ♦ The **Federal Assembly** was to be a 375-member house, partly indirectly elected from British Indian provinces and partly (one-third) nominated by the princes.
- The Council of States was to be a permanent body with one-third members retiring every third year. The duration of the assembly was to be 5 years.
- The three lists for legislation purposes were to **be federal, provincial and concurrent**.
- **Members of the Federal Assembly could move a vote of no-confidence** against ministers. The Council of States could not move a vote of no-confidence.
- **80 per cent of the budget was non-votable.**
- **The Governor-general had residuary powers.** He could (a) restore cuts in grants, (b) certify bills rejected by the legislature, (c) issue ordinances and (d) exercise his veto.
- The system of religion-based and class-based electorates was further extended.

### Provincial Autonomy

- **Dyarchy was replaced by Provincial autonomy.**
- Autonomy and separate legal identity were granted to Provinces.

- Provinces were relieved from "the superintendence, direction" of the secretary of state and governor-general.
- Nowonwards, Provinces **derived their legal authority directly from the British Crown.**

### Provinces: Executive

- **Governor was to be the Crown's nominee and representative to exercise authority** on the king's behalf in a province.
- **Special powers regarding minorities**, rights of civil servants, law and order, British business interests, partially excluded areas, princely states, etc with the Governor.
- Governor had power to take over and run the administration indefinitely.

### Provinces: Legislature

- **Separate electorates** based on Communal Award were to **be made operational**.
- All **members were to be directly elected**. Franchise was extended; women got the right on the same basis as men.
- Council of ministers headed by a Premier and Ministers were to administer all provincial subjects in the council of ministers.
- By the adverse vote of the legislature, ministers could be removed and hence they were answerable.
- Provincial legislature could legislate on subjects in provincial and concurrent lists.
- **All parts of the budget were still not votable (only 40 per cent was votable).**
- Governor could (a) refuse assent to a bill, (b) promulgate ordinances, (c) enact governor's Acts.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Numerous 'safeguards' and 'special responsibilities' of the governor-general worked as obstruction in the proper functioning of the Act. In provinces, the governor still had extensive powers. The Act enfranchised 14 percent of the



British Indian population. The separate electorates and representation of various interests **promoted separatist tendencies which culminated in partition of India.**

However, the Act also **played a key role in the drafting of the Constitution of India, 1950.** A significant chunk of the Constitution, particularly the administrative provisions, are borrowed from the Act.



The period following the non-cooperation movement saw another development of great importance in the history of the nationalist movement in India. Various left-wing groups began to rise and grow both within the Indian National Congress and outside it which ultimately led to the rise of Independent economic and political organizations of the working class in India.

## FACTORS BEHIND RISE OF LEFT-WING GROUPS

- **Sudden Recall of Non-Cooperation Movement:** Radical sections among Indian nationalists, including some members of Congress such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose, were not satisfied with the ideals and attitudes of Gandhiji regarding political affairs in India. **The sudden recall and failure of the non-cooperation movement convinced them even more of the futility of Gandhiji's efforts to achieve freedom.**
- **Not Happy with Swarajists:** These radical nationalists were also not impressed by the objectives and means of the Swarajists who wanted to enter the legislative Councils, obstruct their work according to official plans, expose their weaknesses, and thus use them to rouse public enthusiasm.
- **Unsatisfactory Agrarian Policy Stance:** The agrarian and labour policies of the Congress, which at that time was being dominated by the right wing consisting of zamindars and capitalists, also caused disappointment among the radicals both within and without the Congress. The rise and growth of independent peasants and workers' organizations were, in fact, partly due to the very moderate stand taken by the Congress towards the genuine grievances of the peasants and the workers.
- **Appeal of new Philosophy among young:** In addition, a growing number of young men began to be gradually attracted towards the

philosophy and **ideology of Marxism and Socialism** which preached economic equality, emancipation of the down-trodden and class war. Though, not all of them were convinced of the violent struggle or class war between the haves and have-nots, many of them seriously thought that national independence should be pursued with the ultimate object of establishing a socialist society or at least a socialistic pattern of society in India.

- **Looking towards Soviets:** On top of that, the steady progress of the Soviet Union also raised a lot of hope in them. The Socialists formed workers' and peasants' parties in different parts of India. These parties, invariably, **supported the cause of national movement**, but at the same time, emphasized the political and economic demands of the workers and the peasants and organized them on class lines for their class demands.

Finally, **the adverse effects of the Great Depression of 1929-32**, gave further boost to the growth of the left both within and outside the Congress party. The workers and peasants, whose conditions were worsened by the Depression, asked for better working conditions, while the government and the employers were not in mood, and, in fact, in no position to do so. While the economy of the capitalist countries was in bad shape due to the Depression, the successful completion of the first two five-year plans of the Soviet Union naturally attracted others to turn towards socialism not only in India but all over the world. Thus, the Socialist movement, along with it the left movement, gained momentum in the 1930's and after.

## LEFT WING IN THE CONGRESS

### FORMATION OF LEFT WING

There was no overarching theory that the Indian socialist movement adhered to. The Indian National Congress's left wing was founded by a portion of the Indian Socialists who remained



within the organization (Indian National Congress). **Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose** led a small minority of the congress's left-wing members. Subhash Chandra Bose and **Vitthalbhai Patel** made a statement from **Europe in May 1933**, condemning Gandhiji's leadership at the time he put the Civil Disobedience Movement on hold. The intellectual radicalization of Jawaharlal when he was imprisoned was more significant because it offered an alternative ideology. The Autobiography, which was written in prison in **1934–35**, and his letters to his daughter, which were later published as **Glimpses of World History (1934)**, represent the pinnacle of Nehru's interest in and partial adherence to Marxian Socialist views. The **election of Nehru as President of the Congress in 1929 and 1937 and that of Bose in 1938 and 1939** reflected the left wing attitude of Congress.

### AIM OF THE LEFT WING

The aim of the left wing within the Congress was to **remove the sufferings of the poor** and the downtrodden sections of the Indian Society, though not through violent means, but through gradual legislative process. But they could not succeed fully in achieving their objective mainly due to the domination of the Congress by the right-wing. Nehru drew back from any total breach with Gandhiji and the congress since he saw no reason why he should walk out of the Congress, leaving the field clear to the social reactionaries. And opposition of Gandhiji and his supporters compelled Bose to resign from the president-ship of the Congress in 1939. So, he and many of his left-wing within the Congress remained ineligible towards the socialist movement in India. However, it was due to the efforts of the left-wing that Congress agreed to declare the achievement of a socialist pattern of society as its goal after independence.

### CONGRESS SOCIALISM

The **Congress Socialist Party was founded in 1934** outside of the Congress as a result of the socialist tendency, while the Communist Party

has been expanding since the 1920s. Both parties were led by **Acharya Narendra Dev and Jai Prakash Narayan**. Congressmen who left the National Congress in order to create a socialist government through non-violent means made up the majority of the founders and supporters of **the Congress Socialist Party (CSP)**. The National Congress, which sought to impose a socialist order through nonviolent methods, served as the foundation of the organization's ideology. The founders' ideologies ranged from a hazy, jumbled extreme nationalism to a rather steadfast support for Marxian Scientific Socialism, which Narendra Dev distinguished clearly from merely "social reformism."

The swift ascent of the Congress Socialist Party in states like Uttar Pradesh was totally fictitious. Most of the founding fathers of the party would go on to have extremely erratic and by no means consistently leftist political careers in the future. A large portion of the support was purely opportunistic, coming from groups that had factional disputes with the established congress leadership at various levels. However, the propaganda of the Congress Socialist Party did contribute significantly to sparking discussion among Congress members and leadership on issues like radical agrarian reform, issues with industrial workers, the destiny of princely states, etc.

### Brief Sketches of the Early Socialists

**Yusuf Meherally:** Yusuf Meherally was born in 1903 in a prosperous business family of Bombay. He was influenced by the writings of Mazzini and Garibaldi. In 1928 he organized the **Bombay Provincial Youth League** which took active part in organizing demonstrations against the Simon Commission and in the Civil Disobedience movement.

**Achyut Patwardhan:** Achyut Patwardhan was born in 1905. He was educated at the Banaras Hindu University. After completing his education, he served as a University lecturer for some time, and then visited Europe. He joined the Civil Disobedience Movement and was sentenced



to imprisonment in Nasik jail. Patwardhan was profoundly influenced by the Gandhian and Theosophical ideas.

**Ashok Mehta:** Ashok Mehta was born in 1911 at Sholapur. His father was a prominent Gujarati litterateur. He completed education from Bombay University. He joined the Civil Disobedience Movement and was sentenced to imprisonment in Nasik jail. For a number of years he edited the journal of the Congress Socialist Party entitled Congress Socialist.

**Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia:** He was born in a nationalist Marwari family of Uttar Pradesh in 1910. He was educated at Banaras (Hindu), Calcutta and Berlin universities. He took his doctorate in Political Economy from the Berlin University. After his return to India, Jawaharlal Nehru put him in charge of the Foreign Affairs Department of the All India Congress Committee. Lohia was influenced by the Social Democratic ideas of Europe and the Gandhian ideas. He did not believe in Marxism or Communism. He founded a journal, entitled, Congress Socialist, which later on became the official organ of the Congress Socialist Party.

## COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

The communist movement in India actually had its roots in the national movement itself, as disillusioned revolutionaries, Non-cooperators, Khilafatists, labour and peasant activists sought new routes to political and social emancipation, despite repeated claims by British officials and some academics to the contrary.

It was founded by the well-known **Yugantar rebel Naren Bhattacharji (later known as M.N. Roy)**, who met **Mikhail Borodin, a Bolshevik, in Mexico in 1919** and travelled to Russia in the summer of 1920 to attend the **Communist International's second Congress**. Here, he began a well-known and significant debate with the Communists' approach in the colonial world. M.N. Roy contended that the Indian people were already fed up with bourgeois-nationalist leaders like Gandhiji and were marching toward revolution independently of the bourgeois-

nationalist movement with the zeal and fanaticism of a new convert. The fundamental disagreement in Communist disagreements in India and worldwide up until and even after independence would continue to be how to treat the "national bourgeois" and the nationalist majority in general.

## STAGES OF COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

There are four stages to the rise and expansion of the communist movement in India.

### FIRST STAGE(1920-1928)

A Communist party of India and a political-military school were established in **Tashkent in October 1920 by M.N. Roy, Abani Mukherjee**, and a few Mujahirs, or Khilafat supporters who had joined the hijrat in 1920 and crossed into Soviet territory via Afghanistan. These Mujahirs included **Mohammad Ali and Mohammad Shafiq**. Some of the new Indian recruits joined the Communist University of Toilers of the East in Moscow when early in 1921 the dreams of invading India through Afghanistan faded. In 1922, Roy himself moved his headquarters from London to Berlin. By the end of 1922, Roy had been able to forge some flimsy and frequently intercepted covert ties with emerging communist parties through emissaries like **Nalini Gupta and Shaukat Usmani**. Left nationalist journals like **Atmasakti and Dhumketu** in **Calcutta** and **Navayuga** in **Guntur** had begun publishing eulogistic articles on Lenin and Russia, while Dange was bringing out the weekly Socialist from Bombay, the first definitely communist journal to be published in India. These journals were the Non-cooperation and Khilafat experiences in **Bombay (S.A. Dange) and Lahore (Gulam Hussain)**.

**Wrath of British unleashed:** The true British terror that followed after the formation of a few minor communist organizations in India much outweighed the immediate importance of such actions and could only be explained by the widespread anxiety of the ruling class caused by the 1917 Russian revolutions. In a series of five



Peshawar Conspiracy cases between 1922 and 1927, Mujahirs attempt to return to India were tried, and in May 1924, **Muzaffar Ahmmad, S.A. Dange, Shaukat Usmania**, and **Nalini Gupta** were imprisoned in a Kanpur Conspiracy Case. However, the setback brought on by such coercive tactics only lasted a short while.

### **New life infused in Communist Movement:**

Although organized by a number of different groups, the open Indian Communist Conference was held in **Kanpur in December 1925**. The conference's skeleton organization was quickly taken over by the determined Communists, and the **united Communist Party of India (CPI)** in 1959 recognized the 1925 gathering as the official beginning of the party. However, the notion of a broad front workers and peasants party taking shape in a number of organizations formed between 1925 and 1927 was of considerably more practical relevance. Four workers' and peasants' parties as a result were established in Bombay, Bengal, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh. But until certain communists from Britain arrived in India, these groups were powerless to do much. One of them, Philip Spratt arrived in India in December, 1925, and infused new life in the Communist Party of India. He, with the financial assistance from Moscow, increased the number of unions, conducted strikes and used all other possible methods of propaganda. His efforts resulted in success and the number of Communist members reached a high figure.

During this period, that is till 1928, the Indian Communists on the whole tried to work within the nationalist mainstream even while sharply criticizing Congress leadership for its many compromises with imperialism. They felt that the congress should be opposed only on well defined, specific issues, for, they had followed a unity-cum-struggle policy with regard to the Congress, criticizing its limitation but striving nevertheless to build an anti-imperialists united front.

## **Second Stage(1929-34)**

According to the resolutions of the **Sixth Comintern Congress**, which was held in December 1928, Indian Communists adopted a new ultra-leftist doctrine, which marked the beginning of the Second Stage. They started acting in a very sectarian way to distance themselves from the nationalist majority and broke off any ties to the bourgeois element. They began a full-scale assault against the Congress, its leaders, and Nehru, which caused the Congress to become isolated in the Indian political scene. Thus, the communists were undermined during this time not only by repression (which was significant enough given that they were still a small minority), but also by this significant shift in their approach.

The **All India Trade Union Congress'** leadership was the CPI's only achievement during this time. The party however, brought the wrath of the Government on it when it gave a call for a **general strike by all textile workers in 1934**. The strike succeeded but the government took its revenge. The party along with dozen trade unions under its control was declared illegal. The party had no other alternative except to go underground.

## **Third Stage(1934-1940)**

With the adoption of the policy of infiltration into the Indian National Congress, Congress Socialist Party, the Forward Bloc, and several parent organizations, the third stage got underway. They experienced great success. When the Communist Party was rebuilt in 1935 **under P.C. Joshi's leadership**, the situation underwent a significant transformation. The **Communist International's Seventh Congress**, which met in Moscow in August 1935 in response to the threat of fascism, drastically altered its earlier position and called for the formation of an anti-fascist coalition with socialists and other anti-fascists in capitalist nations as well as with bourgeois-led nationalist movements in colonial nations. The Indian Communists were expected to re-join the mainstream national movement led by the National Congress in its operations.



**Groundwork staged:** Early in 1936, a piece of writing known as the **Dun-Bradley Thesis** set the theoretical and political groundwork for the transformation of communist politics in India. The National Congress may "play a significant part and a leading part in the effort of realizing the anti-imperialist people's front," according to this thesis. They were greeted by **Subhash Chandra Bose**, chairman of the **Left Consolidation Committee**, and **Jayprakash Narayan**, leader of the **Congress Socialist Party**. The communists took full advantage of this, installing some of their members in key positions inside these institutions, and even managed to gain entry into the working committee of the congress. But their game could not continue for very long, and they were removed from both the Forward Bloc and the Congress Socialist Party in 1940, while the left-wing within the Congress was forced to submit to the majority opinion of the right-wing by the end of 1939.

#### Fourth Stage (1941-47)

The World War II presented the CPI with new challenges during the fourth stage. The British Indian Government requested the Indian Communists for support when **Germany attacked Russia and Russia** sided with the Allies. Since they consented to it in December 1941, the government deemed the party legal. When the Congress launched the Quit India Movement in 1942, the Communists responded by swearing allegiance to the government and acting as spies and go-betweens. That once again further damaged the party's reputation among the Indians.

The party, therefore, failed to win a single seat at the general elections to the Central Legislative Assembly in 1945. That was the reason which compelled the party to seek the goodwill of Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress party after Independence. Yet, it was the only party which popularized genuine socialism and communism in India prior to Indian independence.

## REASONS BEHIND FAILURE OF TYPICAL COMMUNISM MODEL

**Lack of able Leadership:** To begin with, the Communists lacked good and mature leadership which could make a proper assessment of the Indian Conditions and rally the masses. Due to this, they blindly followed the dictates of the Comintern and in the process lost the sympathy of the Indian masses. This was quite evident in 1930 (Civil Disobedience Movement) and in 1942 (Quit India Movement).

**Disagreements over frivolous issues:** The Left consistently disagreed with the dominant congressional leadership on the wrong subjects, and when it mattered most, it was either obliged to follow that leadership or was cut off from the larger movement. Contrary to the right-wing of Congress, the Left lacked ideological and strategic flexibility. With crude formulas and aggressive rhetoric, it tried to counter the right-wing. It engaged in a contentious battle with the right on shaky footing. For instance, the most important criticism of the Congress right-wing was that it sought to make a deal with imperialism, was afraid of popular uprisings, and had a partial anti-imperialism due to bourgeois influence. The right-wing has little trouble disproving such accusations. The people rightly believed it and not the Left. Three significant events can be used as examples-

1. The Left and Right clashed in the Congress in 1936-1937 over the topic of elections and office acceptance, which was seen as a concession to imperialism.
2. Gandhiji's hesitation to start a mass movement in 1939-1942 was viewed as a sign of his soft stance toward imperialism and the loss of a golden opportunity.
3. In 1945-1947, the Left opposed the powerful Congress leadership, which included Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, over the issue of power transfer negotiations, which were seen



as British imperialism's last-ditch effort to maintain its dominance.

**Internal Conflicts:** Furthermore, internal conflicts that resulted in the formation of fragmented organizations undermined the Communists. The **ultra-leftism of 1929–1934** produced numerous factions that were completely antagonistic and resulted in a widespread exclusion from the nationalist mainstream. The Comintern dissidents **M.N. Roy and Soumendranath Tagore's** attempts to found their own organizations further complicated matters.

Finally, the British Government's persecution of the communist movement contributed to their failure since it was so terrified of the "Red Menace" following the 1917 Russian Revolution. Numerous setbacks for the Communist movement were undoubtedly caused by the arrest of numerous communist leaders in a number of conspiracy cases, including the **Peshawar case (1922–27)**, **Kanpur case (1924)**, and **Meerut case (1929)**. And the final ban on the CPI between 1934-41 also created problems for the communists.



Two major debates on strategy occurred among the nationalists in the period following the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement. In the first stage of the debate, during **1934-35**, the issue was what course the national movement should take in the immediate future, that is, during its phase of non-mass struggle. The second stage debate considered the question of **office acceptance in the context of provincial elections** held under the autonomy provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

## FIRST STAGE DEBATE

There were three traditional responses—Constructive Work in the villages envisioned by Gandhi; Revival of Constitutional method of Struggle; and the Resumption of the non-constitutional mass movement by Left-wing

**Constructive Work:** Gandhiji emphasized constructive work in the villages, especially the revival of village crafts. Constructive work, said Gandhiji, would lead to the consolidation of people's power, and open the way to the mobilization of millions in the next phase of mass struggle.

**Revival of Constitutional Methods:** Another group of Congressmen pushed for the restoration of the constitutional means of opposition and engagement in the 1934 elections for the Central Legislative Assembly. The new Swarajists, led by **Dr. M.A. Ansari, Asaf Ali, Satyamurthy, Bhulabhai Desai, and B.C. Roy** asserted that elections and participation in legislative councils were necessary to maintain public political interest and morale during a time of political depression and apathy when the Congress was no longer able to support a mass movement. This entailed creating a new political front in order to strengthen the Congress, increase its organizational influence, and get the populace ready for the upcoming major conflict. Gandhiji was given the Swarajist method by **C. Rajagopalachari**, a former no-changer, with the additional stipulation that the Congress should carry out parliamentary activities directly. According

to him, the Congress could gain some respect and trust from the populace even during the brief time the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was in effect with a competently run legislative party.

### Agreement over council Entry

In May 1934, the **All India Congress Committee (AICC)** met at Patna. The purpose was to set up a Parliamentary Board to fight elections under the aegis of the Congress itself. The elections to the Central Legislative Assembly held in November 1934. In this election, Congress captured 45 out of 75 seats reserved for Indians.

**Resumption of the non-constitutional mass movement by the Left:** At this point, a third tactical viewpoint that was based on an alternative approach emerged. Both the council-entry programme and the suspension of civil disobedience and its replacement by the constructive programme were criticized by the strong Left movement that had emerged in the early 1930s. Both of them, according to the communists, would divert attention from the crucial subject of the fight against colonial rule and sidetrack direct mass action and political work among the masses. Instead, as they believed that the situation remained revolutionary due to the ongoing economic crisis and the masses' willingness to fight, the leftists supported the continuance or revival of the non-constitutional mass movement.

## NEHRU REPRESENTING A NEW VISION

It was Jawaharlal Nehru who represented at this time at its most cogent and coherent New Leftist alternative to the Gandhian anti-imperialist programme and strategy. Accepting the basic analytical framework of Marxism, Nehru put forward the Left paradigm in a series of speeches, letters, articles and books and his **Presidential addresses to the Lucknow and Faizpur sessions** of the Congress in 1936. The basic goal before the Indian people, as also before the people of the world, he said, had to be the abolition of capitalism



and the establishment of socialism. The aspects of Nehru's challenge can be understood by following:

### Struggle-truce-struggle

A large number of Congressmen led by Gandhi believed that a mass phase of movement (struggle phase) had to be followed by a phase of reprieve (truce phase) before the next stage of mass struggle could be taken up. The truce period, would enable the masses to regain their strength to fight. It would also give the government a chance to respond to the demands of the nationalists. The masses could not go on sacrifice indefinitely. If the government did not respond positively, the movement could be resumed again with the participation of the masses. This was the struggle-truce-struggle or S-T-S strategy.

- To Nehru, the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement and council-entry and the recourse to constructive programmes represented a 'spiritual defeat' and a surrender of ideals, a retreat from the revolutionary to the reformist mentality, and a going back to the pre-1919 moderate phase.
- According to him, the Congress was giving up all social radicalism and 'expressing a tender solicitude for every vested interest'. Many Congress leaders, he said, 'preferred to break some people's hearts rather than touch others' pockets.
- Nehru pointed to the inadequacy of the existing nationalist ideology and stressed the need to inculcate a new, socialist or Marxist ideology, which would enable the people to study their social condition scientifically.
- Nehru did not subscribe to the strategy of Struggle-Truce-Struggle and believed that the Indian national movement had now reached a stage where there should be a permanent confrontation and conflict with imperialism till it was overthrown. He accepted that the struggle had to go through setbacks and phases of upswing and downswing; but these

should not lead to a passive phase or a stage of compromise or 'cooperation' with the colonial framework towards which permanent hostile and non-cooperation had to be maintained.

### Nehru's Disagreements with Gandhi

His alienation from Gandhiji also seemed to be complete. He wrote in his jail diary in April 1934 'Our objectives are different, our ideals are different, our spiritual outlook is different and our methods are likely to be different.' The way out, said Nehru, lay in grasping the class basis of society and the role of class struggle and in 'revising vested interests in favor of the masses'. This meant taking up or encouraging the day-to-day class, economic demands of the peasants and workers against the landlords and capitalists, organizing the former in their class organizations — Kisan Sabha and trade unions — and permitting them to affiliate with the Congress and, thus, influence and direct its policies and activities. There could be, said Nehru, no genuine anti-imperialist struggle which did not incorporate the class struggle of the masses.

### Nehru's Direct Action Policy

Nehru insisted that the Congress pursue 'an aggressive direct action approach.' This meant that the mass movement should continue even if it was at its lowest point or only existed on a symbolic level. When the current constitutional framework was being developed, no new constitutional phase could be imposed, and the constructive agenda could not be diverted from political and economic class issues. Additionally, every moment eventually reaches a point when it threatens the established order. The conflict then becomes unending and can only be continued by illegal and unlawful measures. This also occurs when the general public enters politics. There was then no room for a compromise. He claimed that with the Lahore Resolution for Poorna Swaraj, this level had been attained in India.

In order to stop the Civil Disobedience Movement from continuing, Nehru opposed all efforts. This



leads to the conclusion that **"the only way out is to battle for independence without compromise, going back, or faltering."** The idea of achieving freedom in stages was another idea Nehru opposed. The pursuit of true power could not be accomplished "bit by bit." Even though it required a non-violent general uprising, "The citadel"—State power—had to be taken. As a result, he countered the **S-T-S (Struggle-truce-struggle)** strategy with the **S-V ('V' standing for victory)** tactic, which is the continuous pursuit of a common cause until victory is achieved.

### INTERVENTION BY GANDHI

The division between Nehru and the Marxists on the one side and supporters of council admission on the other was so stark that many predicted it would happen sooner or later. Gandhiji, however, intervened once more to calm the tension. Although he believed that Satyagraha alone was capable of achieving independence, he appeased the council-entry supporters by carving into their fundamental demand that they be allowed to access the legislatures. He also stood up for them when they were accused of being weaker patriots. He claimed that while parliamentary politics couldn't bring about independence, the enormous number of Congressmen who for one reason or another couldn't participate in Satyagraha or devote themselves to productive labor shouldn't be left idle. When there was no mass movement, they could still demonstrate their patriotism through council work as long as they did not become too self-serving or caught up in constitutionalism. As a result, Gandhiji's leadership at the **AICC conference in Patna in May 1934 led to the decision to establish a parliamentary board to contest elections on behalf of the Congress.** Gandhiji responded to the resolution's Leftwing detractors by saying, "I pray that the majority will always remain untainted by the grandeur of council work. That is never how Swaraj will arrive. Only a

generalized public consciousness can bring about Swaraj.

### Assurance by Gandhi

Gandhi also reassured Nehru and the communists that the reality of the political situation required the end of the civil disobedience. But doing so did not entail adopting a policy of drift, submitting to political opportunists, or making concessions to imperialism. The war went on with only civil disobedience being terminated.

According to him, the new approach "is predicated upon one core idea—that of consolidating the people's power with a view to nonviolent action. In August 1934, he also said to Nehru, "I fancy that I have the knack for sensing the need of the hour."

By endorsing Nehru for the presidency of the Lucknow Congress in spite of opposition from C. Rajagopalachari and other right-wing figures, he also placated the Left. Gandhiji was also convinced that he was at odds with significant movements inside the Congress. He believed that a significant portion of the intelligentsia supported parliamentary politics, which he firmly disagreed with. Because of his emphasis on Harijan work based on a moral and religious perspective, on the spinning wheel as "the second lung of the nation," and other components of the constructive programme, another segment of the intelligentsia felt cut off from the Congress.

### STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

While the Congress's adversaries anticipated that their radicalism would cause them to secede from the body, they had their objectives well in order. Before the fight for socialism could begin, the British had to be gone. Additionally, national solidarity around the Congress—still the only anti-imperialist mass organization—was crucial in the anti-imperialist battle. Nehru and other lefties contended that, even from a socialist perspective, it was preferable to gradually radicalize Congress, where millions upon millions of people were



present, rather than to become distant from them in the interest of political or intellectual purity.

- For instance, Nehru wrote: "I do not understand why I should leave the Congress and hand the initiative to social reactionaries.". I believe it is our responsibility to stay there and exert pressure in order to persuade others to join us or for them to leave.
- According to C. Rajagopalachari, "The British may be hoping for a dispute among Congressmen over this" (socialism). But we want to let them down. In November 1934, elections for the Central Legislative Assembly were conducted. The Congress won 45 of the 75 elected seats reserved for Indians.

The Government had successfully put an end to the mass movement in 1932–1933, but it was conscious that this was just a temporary solution. In the years to come, it was powerless to stop the resurgence of another significant movement. That required permanently weakening the movement. This could be achieved if the Congress was internally divided and large segments of it co-opted or integrated

into the colonial constitutional and administrative structure. The phase of naked suppression should, therefore, be followed, decided by the colonial policy makers, by another phase of constitutional reforms.

### **BRITISH POLICY TO FRAGMENT CONGRESS**

**Creating Differences among Left Wing and Right Wing:** The Government modified its policy of suppressing the anti-constitutionalists in order to diminish the opposition to constitutionalism as a part of this plan. As opposition between the Left and the Right grew within the Congress, the government chose not to respond forcefully to left-wing Congressmen's calls for revolution. This started happening around 1935. In order to cause a rift in the nationalist ranks, the government primarily relied on Nehru's vehement criticism of the right-wing and constitutionalists as well as his

forceful support for socialism and the destruction of colonial rule by revolution. Officials believed that Nehru and his followers had gone so far in their radicalism that they would not retreat when defeated by the right-wing in the AICC and at the Lucknow Congress.

**Provincial autonomy**, it was further hoped, would create powerful provincial leaders in the Congress who would wield administrative power in their own right, gradually learn to safeguard their administrative prerogatives, and would, therefore, gradually become autonomous centers of political power. The Congress would, thus, be provincialized; the authority of the central all-India leadership would be weakened if destroyed. As Linlithgow wrote in 1936, "our best hope of avoiding a direct clash is in the potency of Provincial Autonomy to destroy the effectiveness of Congress as an All-India instrument of revolution".

### **Dissatisfaction over Government of India Act 1935**

Meanwhile, the GoI Act, 1935 was passed. The 1935 Act was condemned by nearly all sections and unanimously rejected by the Congress. The **Hindu Mahasabha and the National Liberal Foundation, however, declared themselves in favour of the working of the 1935 Act** in the central as well as at the provincial level. The Congress demanded, instead, **the convening of a Constituent Assembly** elected on the basis of adult franchise to frame a constitution for independent India.

### **THE SECOND STAGE DEBATE**

Nearly all segments of Indian society denounced the 1935 Act, and the Congress unanimously rejected it. Instead, the Congress demanded the election of a Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution for an independent India via adult franchise. Congressmen's **disagreements over the issue of accepting the post represented the second stage of the strategy discussion**. The British decided



to swiftly implement provincial autonomy after enacting the Act of 1935, and they announced that elections for provincial legislatures would take place in early 1937. Their plan to integrate themselves into the colonial legal system was already in motion. A new political reality was presented to the nationalists. They all concurred that the 1935 Act must be resisted at every turn. There was, of course, full agreement that the Congress should fight the coming elections on the basis of a detailed political and economic programme, thus deepening the anti-imperialist consciousness of the people. questions of the strategy of the national movement and divergent perceptions of the prevailing political situation were involved.

### **DIVIDED OPINIONS ON OFFICE ACCEPTANCE**

**Leftist View:** Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Bose, the Congress Socialists and the Communists were totally opposed to office acceptance and thereby working the 1935 Act. The Left case was presented effectively and passionately by Nehru, especially in his Presidential Address at Lucknow in early 1936.

- First, accepting office meant **“to negate our rejection of it (the 1935 Act) and to stand self-condemned,”** according to the Constitution. Assuming accountability would entail giving up control because the fundamental makeup of the state would not change. Despite the fact that the Congress would be powerless to help the populace, it would be “in some measure with the oppressive apparatus of imperialism, and we would become partners in this repression and in the exploitation of our people.”
- Second, office acceptance would **eliminate the revolutionary spirit that has been ingrained in the movement since 1919.** The question of “whether we want revolutionary changes in India or (whether) we are fighting for small reforms under the auspices of British imperialism,” according to Nehru, is at the heart of this issue.’ Office acceptance

would mean, in practice, ‘a surrender’ before imperialism. The Congress would get sucked into parliamentary activity within the colonial framework and would forget the main issues of freedom, economic and social justice, and removal of poverty. It would be co-opted and de-radicalized. It would fall into a pit from which it would be difficult for us to come out.”

- The counter-strategy that Nehru and the leftists recommended was that the current political situation made it necessary to go through a constitutional phase, for the option of a mass movement was not available at the time. The Congress should, therefore, combine mass politics with work in the legislatures and ministries in order to alter an unfavorable political situation. In other words, what was involved was not a choice between principles but a choice between the two alternative strategies of S-T-S’ and S-V.

**Right Wing View: The case of the right-wing was put with disarming simplicity by Rajendra Prasad and J. B Kriplani** who assured that the Congress has not gone back to the pre-1928 era. That in a revolutionary movement there may be a time of comparative depression and inactivity. At such times, whatever programmes are devised have necessarily an appearance of reformatory activity but they are a necessary part of all revolutionary strategy. As T. Vishwanathan of Andhra put it: ‘To my socialist comrades, I would say, capture or rejection of office is not a matter of socialism. I would ask them to realize that it is a matter of strategy.’

**Views of Gandhiji:** Gandhiji rejected office acceptance and suggested that peaceful preparation in the villages for the continuation of civil disobedience be used as a substitute. Gandhiji was prepared to give the creation of Congress ministries a go since he believed that it was still not practicable at the start of 1936, especially given that the party’s overall sentiment was strongly in favor of it.



## CONGRESS DECIDED TO FIGHT ELECTIONS

In its sessions **at Lucknow (1936) and Faizpur (1936)**, the Congress decided to fight elections and postpone the decision on office acceptance to the post-election phase. The Congress resolution was "not to submit to this constitution or to cooperate with it, but to combat it both inside and outside the legislatures so that it can be ended."

### FAIZPUR SESSION (DECEMBER 1936)

This session of the Congress was held at Faizpur in December 1936 **under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru**. Variety of issues were raised in this session related to both the international and the internal situation. Nehru attacked Fascism in his presidential speech, and the Congress passed resolutions condemning Italian aggression and Japanese aggression of China. The Congress warned the people against the resources of India being used by the British in the case of a World War. On national issues Nehru made it clear that: "the only logical consequence of the Congress policy is to have nothing to do with the office and the ministry. Any deviation from this would ... mean a kind of partnership with British Imperialism in exploitation of the Indian people".

In this session the Congress demanded the formation of a Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution of their own. The question of office acceptance was deferred again. However, the most important thing which the Congress resolved

at Faizpur was the **adoption of an agrarian programme**.

The major features outlined in this programme included:

- 50 per cent reduction in rent revenue,
- Exemption of uneconomic holdings from rent and land tax,
- Taxation on agricultural income
- Abolition of feudal levies and forced labour,
- Cooperative farming,
- Wiping out arrears of rent,
- Recognition of peasant unions, Kisan Sabhas etc.

This programme was however silent on the issue of the abolition of Zamindari and Taluqdari systems. The Kisan Sabha, though welcomed the agrarian programme in general, criticized it on the ground that the programme was silent on abolition of Zamindari and Taluqdari systems. They were supported by the Socialist leaders like **Jayaprakash Narayan**. Here it is worth mentioning that the Right Wing in the Congress was not in favor of Zamindari abolition. But there is no doubt that the Agrarian Programme was a progressive document, and it went a long way in rallying the peasants behind the Congress. By this time the Congress membership increased tremendously. **For example:** there were 4,50,000 members in May 1936, by December 1936 the number stood at 6,36,000.

**In February 1937**, elections to the provincial assemblies were held. Elections were held in eleven provinces—Madras, Central Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, United Provinces, Bombay Presidency, Assam, NWFP, Bengal, Punjab and Sindh.



Indian National Congress in its **Lucknow and Faizpur sessions of 1936 decided to** contest the 1937 elections to the Provincial Assemblies. An **Election Manifesto** in this direction was adopted by the AICC in August 1936. This Election Manifesto aimed at explaining the political and economic policy and program of Congress.

## FEATURES OF THE CONGRESS ELECTION MANIFESTO

- **Rejection of 1935 Act:** The Manifesto stated that the purpose of sending Congressmen to the legislatures was not to cooperate with the Government, but to combat the Act of 1935. British imperialism was to be resisted in its "attempts to strengthen its hold on India.
- **Restoration of Civil Liberties:** It promised the restoration of civil liberties, the release of political prisoners, and the removal of gender and caste-based disabilities.
- **Agrarian Reforms:** It assured the radical transformation of the agrarian system through steps like substantial reduction of rent and revenue, scaling down of rural debts, and cheap credit. The manifesto highlighted the poverty of Indian masses particularly peasants, workers and artisans and stated that "for the vast millions of our countrymen the problem of achieving national independence can give us the power to solve our economic and social problems and end the exploitation of our masses".
- **Rights for Industrial Workers:** It declared the right to form trade unions and to strike; regular working hours and better working conditions.
- **Other promises in the Manifesto include-**
  - Removal of untouchability.
  - Equal status for women,
  - Encouragement to khadi and village industries, and
  - Satisfactory solution on communal problem.

## Selection of Candidates

Let us have a brief look at how the candidates were selected by the Congress. The general procedure was that the **Provincial Congress Committees (PCC)** would recommend names to the Congress Parliamentary Board, and the latter would have the final say in the selection. For doing so the PCC's adopted a criteria which included that the candidate should:

- Abide by Congress discipline,
  - Follow and work for the Congress programme,
- Besides these two basic qualifications, the PCC's also took into account the candidates:**
- Services to the Congress,
  - Popularity among the People.
  - Ability to bear election expenses on their own.

## 1937 ELECTIONS

The elections of provincial assemblies were held in **February 1937** on different dates for **11 Provinces** namely- UP, Bihar, Madras, Central Provinces, Orissa, Bombay, Bengal, Sindh, Assam, NWFP, and Punjab.

### Congress' Performance in 1937 Elections

- Congress won **716 out of 1,161 seats** it contested. This performance raised the prestige of Congress as an alternative to the colonial state.
- It had a majority in **6 provinces** namely- **United Provinces, Bihar, Madras, Central Provinces, Orissa, and Bombay.**
- Congress **did not get a majority in 5 provinces** namely- **Bengal, Assam, the NWFP, Punjab, and Sind.**
- Emerged as the **largest single party** in the provinces of **Bengal, Assam, and the NWFP.**



## FORMATION OF CONGRESS MINISTRIES IN PROVINCES

### Formation of Interim Ministries

- Congress managed to form Ministries in the 6 provinces where it had won the majority.
- Congress wanted assurances from Governors that they would not use their special powers to interfere in the functioning of the Ministries.
- Governors refused to accept these conditions and hence Congress turned down the offer to form Ministries in these Provinces.
- As a reaction, the British Government formed **Interim Ministries** in these Provinces.
- As the Interim Ministries did not command any majority in the legislatures, they **could not continue beyond six months** and hence resigned.

### Performance in Seats Reserved for Muslims

A total of 482 seats were reserved as Muslim seats in the provinces. The performance of both Congress and the Muslim League was not satisfactory in these reserved seats.

**Congress:** Congress won only 26 out of 58 seats it contested. Out of these 26 seats, 19 were in NWFP. It could not get a single Muslim seat in Bombay, U.P., C.P., Sindh, and Bengal.

**Muslim League:** Muslim League did not get a single seat in NWFP. It won only 2 out of the 84 reserved seats in Punjab.

### Congress Ministries

- In June 1937 **Viceroy Linlithgow** clarified the government's stand in relation to the special powers of the Governors vis-à-vis Ministers.
- As a result, Congress met at Wardha and accepted the formation of Ministries. Congress formed Ministries in **6 out of 11 Provinces** in **July 1937**. Later, Congress also formed Ministries in the North-West Frontier Province and Assam.

Province	Congress Prime Ministers
Bombay	B.G.Kher
UP	Govind Ballabh Pant
Madras	<b>C.Rajagopalachari</b>
Orissa	Hare Krishna Mehtab
Central Provinces	Dr.Khare
Bihar	Sri Krishna Sinha
NWFP	Dr. Khan Saheb

### Gandhiji's Advice to The Ministries

- Gandhiji advised them to hold these offices lightly and not tightly.
- Ministries should be seen as '**crowns of thorns**' which had been accepted to see if they quickened the pace towards the nationalist goal.
- Ministries should be used in a way not expected or intended by the British.
- Congressmen should prove that Congress could rule with the least assistance from the police and the Army.

## CONGRESS RULE IN PROVINCES (1937-1939)

The Congress rule in Provinces lasted for **twenty-eight months** from July 1937 to -October 1939. During this rule, a central control board known as the **Parliamentary Sub-Committee of Congress** guided and coordinated the activities of Ministries. Its members were: **Sardar Patel**, **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**, and **Rajendra Prasad**. The Congress Ministries resigned in **October 1939** because of the political crisis brought about by the Second World War.



## WORK UNDER CONGRESS MINISTRIES

Though the power, financial resources, and tenure of Congress Ministries were limited, it tried to introduce some reforms and take some ameliorative measures to give the people a glimpse of the future Swaraj.

### Civil Liberties

#### Achievements:

The Congress Ministries registered major achievements in the sphere of civil liberties, which are as follows:

- **Repeal of laws:** Repealed all emergency powers acquired by the provincial governments during 1932 through laws like the Public Safety Acts.
- **Lifting of Ban:** Lifted bans on illegal political organizations such as the **Hindustan Seva Dal and Youth Leagues** and on political books and journals.
- **Press freedom:** Removed all restrictions on the press. Securities taken from newspapers and presses were refunded and pending prosecutions were withdrawn. The blacklisting of newspapers for purposes of government advertising was given up.
- **Arms:** Returned the confiscated arms and restored forfeited arms licenses.
- **Police Powers:** Curbed the Police powers in the Congress provinces. They stopped reporting of public speeches and the shadowing of political workers by CID agents.
- **Political Prisoners:** Released thousands of political prisoners and revolutionaries involved in different conspiracy cases. They cancelled internment and deportation orders on political workers.
- **Lands:** In Bombay, the Government took steps to restore to the original owner's lands which were confiscated by the Government as a result of the no-tax campaign during the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930.

#### Drawbacks:

- **Yusuf Meherally case:** Yusuf Meherally, a Socialist leader, was prosecuted by the Madras Government for making an inflammatory speech in Malabar. However, he was soon let off.
- **S.S. Batliwala case:** Madras Government prosecuted S.S. Batliwala, a Congress Socialist leader, for making a seditious speech and sentenced him to six months imprisonment. However, Batliwala was released later.
- **Use of CID:** K.M. Munshi, the Home Minister of Bombay, used the CID to watch the Communists and other left-wing Congressmen.

### Agrarian Reforms

Congress could not attempt a complete overhaul of the agrarian structure by completely eliminating the zamindari system. This was due to the following reasons:

- **Power and Financial limitations:** The constitutional structure of the 1935 Act did not provide enough powers to the provincial Ministries. They lacked financial resources.
- **Time Constraint:** The Congress leadership's motive was to confront imperialism and not cooperate with it. Also, war clouds started gathering in Europe from 1938 onwards. Hence, the Congress Ministries had to act rapidly and achieve as much as possible in the short time available to them.
- **Reactionary Secondary Chamber:** The second chamber (Legislative Council) was dominated by landlords, capitalists, and moneylenders, with the Congress forming a small minority. This domination of the upper class posed an obstacle to getting any legislation passed through the second chamber. This was especially true when the legislation was against the upper class like the abolition of Zamindaris.
- **Complicated agrarian system:** The agrarian structure of various parts of India had developed over the centuries and was extremely complex and complicated. Hence there was no easy one-shot solution.



**Achievements:**

Despite the above-discussed constraints, Congress could pass some legislation related to tenancy rights, security of tenure and rents of the tenants, and the problem of rural indebtedness.

- **In UP:** A tenancy act was passed in 1939 which gave hereditary rights in their holdings to all statutory tenants both in Agra and Oudh. The Act took away the landlord's right to prevent the growth of occupancy.
- **In Bihar:** The tenancy legislation, passed mainly in 1937 and 1938, provided the absolute right for the occupancy ryots to transfer their holding on the payment of a nominal amount of two percent of rent to the landlord.
- **In Orissa:** A tenancy bill was passed in 1938 granting the right of free transfer of occupancy holdings and abolished all illegal levies on tenants.

**Drawbacks:**

- **Neglect of sub-tenants and Labourers:** Agrarian Legislations benefited only the statutory and occupancy tenants but overlooked the interests of the sub-tenants of the occupancy tenants and Agricultural laborers.

**Attitude Towards Labour**

The Congress Ministries adopted a pro-labour stance in general and treated militant trade union protests as law-and-order problems, and acted as mediators as far as possible. Their basic approach was to:

- **Advance** workers' interests while promoting industrial peace.
- **Reduce** the resort to strikes as far as possible.
- **Create** goodwill between labor and capital with Congress and its ministers assuming the role of intermediaries.
- **Improve** the conditions of the workers and increase their wages.

**Achievements:**

- **In Bombay:** The Bombay Ministry appointed a Textile Enquiry Committee in 1937 which recommended an increase in wages amounting to a crore of rupees. Despite mill owners' protests the recommendations were implemented.
- **In All Provinces:** The Governments passed the Industrial Disputes Act which emphasised conciliation, arbitration, and negotiations in place of direct action. The Act empowered the Government to refer an industrial dispute to the Court of Industrial Arbitration to avoid strikes and lockouts.

**Social Welfare Reforms:****Achievements:**

- **Prohibition:** Introduced drinking Prohibition in selected areas in different states.
- **Welfare of Harijans:** Passed laws to enable Harijans to enter temples and to get free access to public office, public places and public institutions maintained out of public funds.
  - ♦ Made efforts to increase the number of scholarships for Harijan students and the number of Harijans in police and other government services.
- **Health and Education:** Paid a lot of attention to primary, technical, and higher education and public health and sanitation.
  - ♦ Expanded education for girls and Harijans.
  - ♦ Organized mass literacy campaigns among adults.
  - ♦ Introduced basic education with an emphasis on manual and productive work.
- **Industries:** Encouraged Indigenous enterprises and provided subsidies to Khadi, spinning, and village industries.
- **Prisoners:** They had taken up schemes of prison reforms.
- **Planning:** They joined the effort to develop planning through the **National Planning Committee** appointed in 1938 by Congress President Subhas Bose.



## Extra-Parliamentary Mass Mobilisation of Congress

- **Congress Committees:** They organized Congress committees in villages. They set up Congress police stations and panchayats to dispense justice under the leadership of local Congress committees.
- **Petitions and Grievances:** They organized mass petitions to officials. They also set up the Congress grievance committees in the districts to hear local grievances and report them to MLAs and Ministers.
- **Mass Literacy Campaigns:** Arranged mass literacy campaigns to explain to the people the working of the Ministries.
- **Camps and Conferences:** Arranged local, district, and provincial camps and conferences to celebrate various days and weeks.

## EVALUATION OF CONGRESS RULE

### Significance

- **Mass-energy:** The extension of civil liberties led to great enthusiasm among the people and released the suppressed mass energy towards the national movement.
- **Prestige of Congress:** Congress could use State power for the people's benefit, thus raising the prestige of Congress and hopes of the people for self-government.
- **Kisan Sabhas:** These were set up in every part of the country.
- **Trade Unions:** There was an immense growth in trade union activity and membership.
- **Student and Youth Movements were** revived and expanded.
- **Communalism:** They firmly handled the communal riots. They asked the district

magistrates and police officers to take strong action to deal with any communal outbreak.

- **Bureaucracy:** The Congress rule extended the national movement's influence to the bureaucracy, lowering the morale of the ICS (Indian Civil Service). Many ICS officers believed that the British departure from India was only a matter of time.
- **Left Parties:** There was a large expansion of Left Parties. Communist Party was banned by the Central Government, but it was able to bring out its weekly organ, The National Front, from Bombay Province. The CSP brought out The Congress Socialist and several other journals.
  - ♦ For example, Kirti Lehar - Kirti Communists of Punjab were brought out from Meerut, U.P., because they could not do so in Unionist-ruled Punjab.

### Limitations

- **Imperialistic character:** Congress Ministries could not change the basic imperialist character of the system through their administration.

### Pirpur Committee in 1938

- All India Muslim League was annoyed with the Congress for not sharing power with them.
- The League established the Pirpur Committee in 1938 to prepare a detailed report on the atrocities supposedly committed by the Congress ministries.
- In its report the committee charged Congress with interference in the religious rites, suppression of Urdu in favour of Hindi, denial of proper representation and of the oppression of Muslims in the economic sphere.



In the 1930s, there was a nation-wide awakening among the Indian peasants about their own strength and capacity to organize themselves for the betterment of their living conditions. The nation-wide awakening was the result of two major events that occurred during this period-The **Great Depression** began to hit India from 1929-30 and the new phase of **mass struggle launched by the Indian National Congress in 1930 (Civil Disobedience Movement)**.

### Great Depression

The Great Depression **was worldwide economic depression** which started in 1929 and lasted till late 1930s. It began with US stock market collapse in October 1929. By 1933 almost half of the Banks in US collapsed and went Bankrupt. During this period most parts of the world experienced huge declines in production, employment, incomes and trade. In general, agricultural regions and communities were the worst affected. This was because the **fall in agricultural prices was greater and more prolonged than that in the prices of industrial goods**.

You will read about Great depression in detail in world History segment.

**India and the Great Depression:** The depression immediately affected Indian trade. India's exports and imports nearly halved between 1928 and 1934. As **international prices crashed, prices in India also plunged**. Between 1928 and 1934, wheat prices in India fell by 50 per cent.

Peasants and farmers suffered more than urban dwellers. Though agricultural prices fell sharply, the colonial government refused to reduce revenue demands. Peasants producing for the world market were the worst hit. Across India, peasants' indebtedness increased. They used their savings, mortgaged lands, and sold whatever jewellery and precious metals they had to meet their expenses. In these depression years, India became an exporter of precious metals, notably gold. The **famous economist John Maynard Keynes** thought that Indian gold exports promoted

global economic recovery. They certainly helped speed up Britain's recovery, but did little for the Indian peasants. **Rural India was thus seething with unrest when Mahatma Gandhi launched the civil disobedience movement at the height of the depression in 1931.**

## CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND PEASANTS MOVEMENT

### Launch of no tax and no rent campaign by Peasants

The Civil Disobedience Movement was launched in the atmosphere of discontent in 1930 (impacts of great depression on Indian Economy). The Depression brought agricultural **prices crashing down** to half or less of their normal levels. The declining prices of agricultural products gave a serious blow to the already burdened (**with high taxes and rents**) Indian peasantry. The British Government in India was not ready to scale down its own rates of taxation or in asking zamindars to bring down their rents. In a nutshell, the peasants were placed in a situation where they had to continue to **pay taxes, rents, and debts at pre-Depression rates while their incomes continued to decline** during the Great depression.

When the Civil Disobedience Movement was launched, it soon took the form of a **no-tax and no-rent campaign**. Peasants were inspired by the success of the Bardoli Satyagraha (1928) and joined the Civil Disobedience movement in large numbers. Peasants joined the no rent and no tax campaign in large numbers. The Indian peasants tried to give the Civil Disobedience movement a shape of no rent and no tax protest. **Let us see few examples:**

- **In Andhra**, the political movement was soon combined with the campaign against resettlement that threatened an increase in land revenue. Anti-zamindari struggles emerged in Andhra, and the first target was the Venkatagiri zamindari in Nellore district.



- In the U.P., no-revenue soon turned into no-rent and the movement continued in the truce period of **Gandhi Irwin Pact**. Gandhiji himself issued a manifesto to the **U.P. kisans** asking them to pay only fifty per cent of the legal rent and get receipts for payment of the full amount.
- **Peasants in Gujarat**, especially in Surat and Kheda, refused to pay their taxes and migrated to neighbouring Baroda territory to escape from government's repression.
- In **Bihar and Bengal**, powerful movements were launched against the hated chowkidari tax by which villagers were made to pay for the upkeep of their own oppressors.
- In **Punjab**, a no-revenue campaign was accompanied by the emergence of Kisan Sabhas that demanded a reduction in land revenue and water-rates and reduction of debts.
- In tribal areas of Maharashtra, Central Province and Bihar, **Forest Satyagrahas** was launched. **Peasants, including tribals, defied the forest laws** that prohibited them from use of the forests and its resources.

### Contribution of Civil Disobedience Movement to the Peasant Movement

The Civil Disobedience Movement contributed to the emerging peasant movement by giving rise to young militant, political cadres. The new political workers from this cadre were **influenced by the left ideology** propagated by **Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Bose, the Communists and other Marxist and Left individuals** and groups **during late 1920s and 30s**. When the Civil Disobedience movement was phasing out, the political workers of newly formed militant and political cadres, began to search for an outlet of their political energies and many of them found the answer **in organizing the peasants**. **Also, the formation of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) in 1934 gave a further push to leftist forces in India and organized the peasants in left ideology**. The Congress Socialists played an important role

in the Kisan (peasant) movement. Through the efforts of Prof. **N.G. Ranga, Indulal Yagnik, and Swami Sahajanand Saraswati**, the **All-India Kisan Sabha was organized**. Thus, **culmination of left ideology led to the establishment of the All-India Kisan Congress in Lucknow in April 1936** which later changed its name to the **All-India Kisan Sabha**.

### ALL-INDIA KISAN SABHA (AIKS)

In different regions, provincial Kisan Sabhas were already formed by the 1920s. In the 1920s Kisan Sabhas were organised in Bengal, Punjab and U.P. In 1928, the Andhra Provincial Ryots Association was formed. But the need for a central organization of the peasants was felt by the socialists and the communists. Their efforts led to the **formation of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) in 1936**. **Swami Sahajanand** was elected as President and **N.G.Ranga** was general secretary of Kisan Sabha. By 1937 branches of the All India Kisan Sabha were formed in different provinces. **N.G. Ranga, Swami Sahajanand, Narendra Dev, Indulal Yagnik and Bankim Mukherjee** were some of the prominent leaders of the All India Kisan Sabha. The **objectives of the Kisan Sabha were:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • The protection of the peasants from economic exploitation                     | • Licensing of moneylenders,               |
| • The abolition of landlordism, such as the Zamindari and the Taluqdari systems | • Minimum wages for agricultural labourers |
| • Reduction of revenue and rent   | • Fair price for commercial crops,         |
| • Moratorium on debts   | • Irrigation facilities, etc.              |

In the meetings and demonstrations of Kisan Sabha, the objectives mentioned above were popularized and pressure was put on the Government to concede to these demands.

**First session of All-India Kisan Sabha:** The first session of All India Kisan Sabha was held in Lucknow



in 1936. It was attended by Jawaharlal Nehru, Ram Manohar Lohia, Sohan Singh Josh, Indulal Yagnik, Jayaprakash Narayan, Mohanlal Gautam, Kamal Sarkar, Sudhin Pramanik and Ahmed Din. The Conference resolved to bring out a **Kisan Manifesto and a periodic bulletin edited by Indulal Yagnik**. The agrarian programme adopted by the Congress at its Faizpur session.

**Second Session:** It was held at **Faizpur in Maharashtra**, along with the Congress session. It was presided over by N.G. Ranga. The growth of Kisan Sabhas also worked as a pressure on the Indian National Congress. The Congress adopted agrarian programmes in its Faizpur sessions (December 1936). This agrarian programme was deeply influenced by kisan manifesto. Also, in its second annual meeting (**Faizpur**), the AICS urged "all anti-imperialist forces in the country and especially the Kisans and workers to develop their day-to-day struggle against the exploiters, as represented by the British Government in India, the Zamindars and landlords and industrialists and moneylenders."

### DO YOU KNOW?

#### Faizpur: First 'rural' Session (Dec 27, 1936)

Held at **Faizpur near Jalgaon (Maharashtra)**, this was the first Congress Session in a rural area. **Pandit Nehru** said during his presidential address, 'A vaster and more pressing problem is that of the peasantry, for India is essentially a land of the peasants. In recognition of this fact, and to bring the Congress nearer to the peasant masses, we are meeting here today at the village of Faizpur and not, as of old, in some great city'.

### Kisan Sabha and its Movements

As we know that in early 1937, elections to provincial assemblies were announced. The Congress ministries were formed in Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces, Orissa, United Provinces, and Bihar and later in the NWFP and Assam also. **Formation of Congress ministries in the provinces**

**gave a new impetus to the kisan movements across the countries.** The Congress ministries undertook various measures like reducing the debt burdens by fixing interest rates in all provinces ruled by it, enhancements of rent were checked, many cultivators were given the status of occupancy tenants in UP, etc. Let us see in detail about kisan movements in various provinces.

### Bihar

The Kisan Sabha launched a new type of movement which was directed mainly against the landlords. In **Bihar** there was a popular movement in 1937-38 which was known as the **Bakasht Movement. Bakasht means self-cultivated.** The landlords often evicted the tenants from Bakasht land. Bihar launched the **Bakasht Movement** during which the peasants fought against eviction. There were clashes between the landlords and the peasants.

The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha formed in 1929 successfully popularized the kisan Sabha programme through meetings, conferences, rallies, and mass demonstrations, including a one-thousand-strong demonstration in Patna in 1938. These meetings and conferences raised some popular demands like the slogan of zamindari abolition, preventing tenant evictions, and returning Bakasht lands.

Meanwhile congress ministries in the Bihar province had initiated legislation for rent reduction and restoration of Bakasht land. However, the legislation passed in Bihar on Bakasht land did not satisfy the radical leaders of the kisan sabha. This was because the legislation returned a portion of the lands to the tenants on the condition that they pay half of the land's auction price. Furthermore, certain types of land were exempted from the law's application. This created a rift between the kisan sabha and the Congress Ministry. As a result, the movement died out by August 1939.

**Leadership:** **Swami Sahajanand** and other left wing leaders such as **Karyanand Sharma, Rahul Sankritayan, Panchanan Sharma, and Yadunandan Sharma** came together to spread kisan sabha organization to the village of Bihar.



## Malabar, Kerala

In the Malabar region, the peasants were mobilized mainly by the Congress Socialist Party activists. Many "**Karshak Sanghams**" (peasants' organisations) came into existence. The most popular form of protest of Karshak Sanghams were the **jathas marches**, which were often conducted to create awareness and to encourage mass participation.

The main demands of the peasants in Malabar region were abolition of feudal levies (akramapirivukal), renewal fees (policceluthu), advance rent, and the prohibition of landlords evicting tenants on the basis of personal cultivation. The Karshak Sanghams also organised a campaign (November, 1938) to amend the **Malabar Tenancy Act of 1929**. The All Malabar Karshaka Sangham appointed a committee headed **by R. Ramachandra Nedumgadi to investigate the tenurial problem in Malabar**, and the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee endorsed its recommendations on November 20, 1938.

Campaign for the amendment of **the Malabar Tenancy Act, 1929** was one of the significant campaigns in Malabar region of Kerala. In December 1938, two jathas set out from Karivallur in north Malabar and Kanjikode in the south, and converged at Chevayur near Calicut, where the All Malabar Karshaka Sangham was holding its conference. Also, the same evening, **P. Krishna Pillai** (the CSP and later Communist leader) presided over a public meeting at Calicut beach. Here, the resolutions demanding changes to the Tenancy Act were passed. Also **T. Prakasam** toured Malabar in December 1938 to familiarize himself with the tenant problem in response to public pressure. T. Prakasam was the revenue minister in the Congress Ministry in Madras Presidency at that time.

The Congress Ministries had already resigned (1939) by the time the Committee (appointed by All Malabar Karshaka Sangham) submitted its report in 1940, so no immediate progress could be made.

However, the campaign against Malabar Tenancy act, 1929 had successfully mobilized the peasantry on the issue of tenancy and raised awareness. The campaign was thus successful in influencing the government to pass **legislation for debt relief**.

**Leadership:** P. Krishna Pillai and T. Prakasam

### P. Krishna Pillai (1906- 1948)

P. Krishna Pillai was Kerala's first communist. He was known to the masses simply as **Sakhavu (comrade)**. Krishna Pillai began his career in the Indian National Congress - **first as a Gandhian and then as a Congress Socialist**. In the early 1930s, when he began his political activity, Krishna Pillai was exposed to the radical politics challenging the British in various parts of north India. Later, he was among the first to be recruited to the Communist Party of India and became a **life-long adherent to the cause of communism**.

When a group of Congress leaders defied the salt law on the beaches of feudal Malabar, Krishna Pillai, braved the punishing blows of the British police to hold afloat the tricolour in true Gandhian style. In September 1931, he became the **first non-Brahmin to ring the sacred bell at the Guruvayoor temple ignoring the Zamorin's Nair guards**.

## Coastal Andhra

The **Andhra Provincial Ryots Association** and the **Andhra Zamin Ryots Association** led the peasant movement against zamindars in Coastal Andhra. Also, **N.G. Ranga** ran the **Indian Peasants' Institute** (since 1933) in his home village **of Nidobrolu in Guntur district**. This institute trained peasants to be active workers in the peasant movement. After 1936, left-wing Congressmen, many of whom later joined the CPI, joined the effort to organize the peasants, with P. Sundarayya being one of the most prominent among them. At many places, the summer schools of economics and politics were held and addressed by leaders like **P.C. Joshi, Ajoy Ghosh and R.D. Bhardwaj**.

In 1938, the Provincial Kisan Conference organized a massive march covering nine districts



in coastal Andhra. One of their main demands was debt relief, which was included in the Congress Ministry's legislation and was well received in Andhra Pradesh. The Congress Ministry in Andhra had appointed a **Zamindari Enquiry Committee in response to the peasants' demands**, but the legislation based on its recommendations could not be passed before the Congress Ministries resigned.

**Leaders:** P. Sundarayya, C. Joshi, Ajoy Ghosh and R.D. Bhardwaj

### Bengal

In Bengal also the Kisan Sabha was active. In the **Burdwan district the Canal Tax** was imposed on the peasants after the construction of the Damodar Canal. The Kisan Sabha organised a **satyagraha movement for the reduction of Canal Tax**. The Government partly accepted the demand of the Kisan Sabha and the movement was withdrawn. In north Bengal districts the **hat tola** movement was launched. The landlords collected a levy from the peasants who sold rice, paddy, vegetables, cattle in fairs and hats (weekly markets). The peasant refused to pay this levy. Sometimes the landlords **came** to a compromise with the peasants and exempted poor peasants from **paying** the levy.

In 1939 there was a movement of the sharecroppers. They were poor peasants who tilled the land of the landlord and gave a portion of the produce to the landlord, but they had no security of tenure and could be evicted by the landlord. In 1939 the tenants took the crop from the field to their threshing flour. Previously they had to carry the crop to the landlord's granary, where the crop was threshed and then divided between the sharecropper and the landlord. The movement became strong in **Dinajpur district in north Bengal**.

The Government came to a compromise with the peasants. It was decided that in future paddy would be stored in a place to be decided by the landlord and the sharecropper. Thus the movement was successful, and the peasants learnt the power of organization.

**Leadership:** Bankim Mukherji, the peasants of Burdwan

### Punjab

The Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, the Kirti Kisan Party, the Congress and the Akalis have already played the ground role for mobilizing peasants. The **Punjab Kisan Committee**, formed in 1937, gave **Congress, Akali activists**, Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha and the Kirti Kisan Party a new sense of direction and cohesion.

Kisan workers toured villages, **enrolling kisan Sabha and Congress members**, organizing meetings, and mobilizing people for tehsils, district, and provincial level conferences. The **most important demands were for lower taxes and a debt moratorium**. The Unionist Ministry, which was dominated by the Western Punjab's big landlords, was the target of the peasant's movement.

The immediate issues taken up by the peasants were resettlement of land revenue in Amritsar and Lahore and increase in water rates or canal tax. The massive demonstrations were held after Jathas marched to the district headquarters. There was a Lahore **Kisan Morcha in 1939**.

In the Multan and Montgomery canal colony areas, a different kind of struggle erupted. Large private companies that had leased this newly colonized land from the government, as well as some large landlords, insisted on collecting a variety of feudal levies from the share-croppers who worked on the land. Here the peasants went on a strike and were finally able to win concessions.

The peasant discontent was also widespread in the princely states of Punjab. The most powerful movement arose in Patiala, and it was founded on the demand for the restoration of lands that had been illegally seized by a landlord-official alliance through deception and intimidation. The **muzaras** (tenants) refused to pay their **biswedars** (landlords) the **batai** (share rent), and were led by Leftists such as **Bhagwan Singh Longowalia and Jagir Singh Joga**, and Teja Singh Swatantar. This struggle raged on intermittently until 1953, when legislation was passed allowing tenants to become landowners.

**Leadership:** Montgomery and Multan districts: Baba Sohan Singh, Teja Singh Swatantar, Baba Rur



Singh, Master Hari Singh, Bhagat Singh Bilga, and Wadhawa Ram. Princely states of Punjab: Bhagwan Singh Longowalia and Jagir Singh Joga, and Teja Singh Swatantar.

## Assam

### Facts

Swami Sahajanand (1889-1950)

Sahajanand Saraswati was a nationalist and a peasant leader of India. Although **born in North-Western Provinces (present-day Uttar Pradesh)**, his social and political activities **focussed mostly on Bihar** in the initial days. His work gradually spread to the rest of India with the formation of the **All India Kisan Sabha**. He had set up an ashram at **Bihta, near Bihar** carried out most of his work in the later part of his life from there. He was an **intellectual, prolific writer, social reformer and revolutionary**.

Saraswati organised the **Bakasht Movement in Bihar** in 1937-1938. He also led the **successful struggle in the Dalmia Sugar Mill at Bihta**, where peasant-worker unity was the most important characteristic. During Quit India movement, he was arrested. **Subhash Chandra Bose and All India Forward Bloc** decided to observe 28 April as **All-India Swami Sahajanand Day** in protest of his incarceration by the British Raj.

**Subhash Chandra Bose said:** "Swami Sahajanand Saraswati is, in the land of ours, a name to conjure with. The undisputed leader of the peasant movement in India, he is today the idol of the masses and the hero of millions..."

Acharya Narendra Dev (1889-1956)

He was born in 1889 in Uttar Pradesh. In the early part of his life he was influenced by the extremist nationalists like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Har Dayal and Aurobindo. After the Bolshevik Revolution he turned to Marxism. He devoted himself to the organization of peasantry in Uttar Pradesh. He also valued the role of middle class intellectuals in the socialist movement. He proved himself to be a great exponent of Marxism and at the same time supported Gandhi's constructive activity.

Narendra Dev came to be **known as Acharya** when he took over **Kashi Vidyapeeth** as its vice-chancellor in 1926. The same year, he along with Sampurnanand drew up a **socialist agrarian programme that was accepted by the AICC in 1929**. On May 17, 1934 in Patna, **Narendra Dev presided over the founding convention of the Congress Socialist Party**.

He was one of the first persons who **translated Aurobindo's Bengali language** articles into Hindi. He wrote a voluminous study of the **Buddhist philosophy in Hindi like Bauddha Dharma Darshan**. He also translated **into Hindi the French version of Vasubandhu's Abhidharma Kosha** (works of the Sarvastivadins).

In Assam, **Karuna Sindhu Roy** led a major movement for amendment of the tenancy law and on the other hand no-rent struggle continued for six months against zamindari reforms.

## Orissa

In Orissa, the Utkal Provincial Kisan Sabha, founded **by Malati Chowdhury** and others in 1935, was successful in having the kisan manifesto accepted as part of the Provincial Congress Committee's election manifesto, and the Ministry that followed passed significant agrarian legislation.

In other parts of Orissa, a powerful movement was led on the issues of **forced labor, forest rights, and rent reduction, with tribals as participants**. Dhenkanal saw major clashes, and thousands fled the state to avoid repression.

## Gujarat

The main demand in Gujarat was for the abolition of the hail (bonded labor) system, which was met with great success.

## PEASANT MOVEMENTS (1940S)

### BACKGROUND

**1940'S was the period of Quit India.** The Quit India movement began under the condition



of a leadership vacuum. Almost the entire top leadership of the Congress was arrested, and even other leaders were forced to go underground. **Local leaders sprang up who spurred the peasants** to attack the government property such as police stations, treasury buildings, railway stations, post offices and electric installations. **All sections of peasants**, cutting across caste lines, and even many landlords supported the movement believing that the British rule was at an end.

Peasants and agricultural workers participated in destroying the symbols of colonial authority in villages and established their own raj. In Bihar, UP, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and several other parts of the country the peasants rose along with workers and middle classes against colonial rule.

Later in the 1940s, some of the peasant movements became very **militant and radical**. The **communist-led Bengal Kisan Sabha** prepared the ground for the widespread **Tebhaga movement in 1946** which continued for about a year before being suppressed by the government and the landlords. **In Hyderabad**, a long protracted peasant rebellion against the landlords and the Nizam was organised by the communists. It was called the **Telangana Movement**. Let us read about the movements in detail.

### **TEBHAGA MOVEMENT (1946)**

The main center of the Tebhaga movement was **North Bengal**. During the 1940s, a new group of landholders emerged in Bengal known as **Jotedars**. Jotedars were rich and wealthy peasants and used to own large stretches of cultivable land. The sharecroppers used to work as agricultural labor on lands of jotedars i.e. sharecroppers were dependent on Jotedars for their livelihood. The sharecroppers were also called as Bargadars, Bagchasi, Adhyars, etc in Bengal.

The agricultural produce used to be kept by Jotedars and then Jotedars used to give half of the agricultural produce to the sharecroppers. However, the sharecroppers were not happy with such division of agricultural produce. Thus,

sharecroppers started viewing the customary division of crops to be wholly disadvantageous to their well-being.

In 1940, **Bengal Land revenue commission** (also known as Flood Commission) was appointed under the chairmanship of Francis Flood in Bengal. The commission recommended that Bargadars should give only 1/3rd of the land produced to Jotedars and the remaining 2/3rd should be kept for Bargadars themselves. This is termed as tebhaga i.e. teen Bhag or division, out of which only one part would be given to Jotedars. However, the recommendation of the commission was not implemented till 1946.

Thus the **tebhaga movement started in 1946** in which sharecroppers demanded two thirds of the produce from land for themselves and one third for the Jotedars as recommended by the Flood Commission. In September 1946, the **Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha** (Peasant's wing of Communist Party of India) gave a call to implement **Flood Commission recommendations of tebhaga** through mass struggle.

The bargadars were provided support by varied communities like the urban student militias and the communist cadres. Their slogan was "**nij khamare dhan tolo**" i.e., the sharecroppers would be taking the paddy to their own houses from threshing rather than to those of the jotedars, to enforce the resolutions of tebhaga.

In many areas, the peasants even tried to remove the paddy already stored in the jotedars' khamars (godowns) on their own which resulted in innumerable clashes. Entire **north Bengal became the hotbed of agitation** with certain parts of Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Rangpur playing the leading roles.

Despite the communal tensions in Calcutta and Noakhali during this period, the **Muslim peasants took an active part and threw up militant leaders of the movement**. The movement received an additional boost when the **Muslim League Ministry led by Suhrawardy** published in the Calcutta Gazette that as per the Bengal Bargadars



Temporary Regulation Bill, it was no longer illegal to demand for tebhaga.

The tebhaga movement, however, wilted in the face of a repressive Government, the apathy of the Congress and the League, the hostility of the Bengali middle classes, and, above all, the worsened communal situation in Bengal. For example: Hindu Mahasabha's agitation for a separate Bengal and riots in Calcutta. These factors shifted the focus and sympathies of the urban class from the peasants' cause.

### TELANGANA MOVEMENT 1946-1948

The Telangana Movement was a fight against the feudal oppression of the rulers and local landowners of Andhra Pradesh. It was launched by CPI through its peasant wing, the Kisan Sabha.

The **agrarian social structure of Princely state of Hyderabad state under Nizams** was very oppressive in the 1920s and thereafter. Two types of land tenure systems were prevalent in Hyderabad namely, **Khalsa or Diwani and Jagirdari**. The **Diwani** was similar to the Ryotwari system where the peasants owned patta in their names that were registered and the actual owners were **shikmidars**. In the **jagirdari system** Nizam's lands were granted to the Nizam's noblemen in return for their services. The peasants were most oppressed under the jagirdari system. In rural areas, the **jagirdar and deshmukh**, locally known as dora, had immense power at the local level. They were the intermediary landowners cum money lenders cum-village officials and were mostly from the **upper caste or influential**

**Muslim community backgrounds**. Because of their privileged economic and political status they could easily subject the poor peasantry to extra-economic coercion known as **as vetti** (force labour). Also, under the Jagirdari system, the **jagirdars and deshmukhs** could force a family to cultivate his land and other works that would continue from generation to generation.

The movement led by the Communists began in **Nalgonda district in 1946** which spread to the neighbouring Warangal and Bidar districts and finally engulfed the whole of the Telangana region. The movement was **against the illegal and excessive extraction** by the rural feudal aristocracy and thus concerned with the whole of the peasantry. The demands included **writing off of peasants' debt**. The movement took a revolutionary turn in 1948 when the **peasants formed an army and started fighting guerilla wars**. Over 2,000 villages set up their **own 'People's Committees'**. These 'Committees' took over land, maintained their own army and own administration.

**Razakars**, a private militia, organised by **Qasim Razvi** to support the Nizam, brutally started crushing the armed revolts by the peasants. The armed resistance continued until 1950 and was finally crushed by the Indian army. The **movement was ultimately called off in 1951**.

The cost of the movement was quite heavy. As many as 4000 communists and peasant militants were killed; more than 10,000 communist cadres and people's fighters were thrown into detention camps and jails for a period of 3-4 years.

### CONFERENCES OF THE ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA

When and Where	Office bearer
April 1936 Lucknow	<b>President:</b> Swami Sahajanand Saraswati <b>General Secretary:</b> Prof N.G. Ranga
December 1936 Faizpur, Maharashtra	<b>President Prof:</b> N.G. Ranga <b>General Secretary:</b> Swami Sahajanand Saraswati
May 1938 Comilla (now in Bangladesh)	<b>President:</b> Swami Sahajanand Saraswati <b>General Secretary:</b> Prof. N.G. Ranga



When and Where	Office bearer
April 1939 Gaya	<b>President:</b> Acharya Narendra Dev <b>General Secretary:</b> Swami Sahajanand Saraswati
March 1940 Palasa, Vishakhapatnam	<b>President:</b> Rahul Sankrityayana <b>General Secretary:</b> Indulal Yagnik
May 1942 Bihta, Bihar	<b>President:</b> Indulal Yagnik <b>General Secretary:</b> Swami Sahajanand Saraswati
April 1943 Bhakna Kalan, Amritsar	<b>President:</b> Bankim Mukherjee <b>General Secretary:</b> Swami Sahajanand Saraswati
March 1944 Vijaywada	<b>President Swami:</b> Sahajanand Saraswati <b>General Secretary:</b> Bankim Mukherjee
April 1945 Netrokona (now in Bangladesh)	<b>President:</b> Muzaffar Ahmad <b>General Secretary:</b> Bankim Mukherjee
May 1947 Sikandra Rao, Aligarh	<b>President:</b> Karyanand Sharma <b>General Secretary:</b> Abdullah Rasul



**W**hen the Indian subcontinent was under British colonization, it was observed that **nearly two-fifths of the sub-continent was under the rule of Indian Princes.** Some of the prominent areas ruled by the princes' included Indian states like **Mysore, Hyderabad, Kashmir,** that were nearly as big as some of the European nations. There were also other princely states that had a population of thousands. The commonality between these small

and big states was that they all had recognized the paramountcy of the British Government. Also, in return the British had promised these states protection against any threats that these Princely states may face, internal or external. Consequently, the rulers felt no need to undertake even the minimum of measures to ensure the goodwill of their subjects. Most-states were run on out-and-out autocratic principles.



## CONDITION OF PRINCELY STATES

Most of the princely states were under the absolute **autocratic power of their ruler** or his favourites. Owing to this particular fact, the **polity, society and economy of the princely states** was quite different to the provinces governed by the British government in the following respect:

1. The **burden of land taxes** on the common people was much **heavier than** that witnessed in **British India**.
2. There **wasn't much rule of law** that was followed since some states didn't even possess codified laws.
3. The civil liberties in some princely states were absent.
4. The **rulers had unrestricted access and control over the state revenues for their personal use**. This led to extravagant personal parties and luxurious lifestyles and waste of state funds.
5. From time to time, some enlightened rulers and their ministers however did make attempts to introduce reforms in the administration, reforms in the system of taxation and even granted powers to the people to participate in the processes of governance.
6. A commendable mention of Princes of **Mysore and Baroda** must be done, who succeeded in promoting **industrial and agricultural development, political and administrative reforms, and education** to a considerable degree.
7. The majority of the other princely states were, however, strongholds of economic, political, social and educational backwardness.

## INFLUENCE OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The national movement in British India exercised a powerful and growing influence on the people

of the Princely States. The ideas of **democracy, responsible government and civil liberties** popularized by the nationalists had an immediate relevance for people of Princely states as they in their daily life suffered the excesses of autocratic rule. These ideas were carried at first by individual nationalists, some of them revolutionaries from British India seeking shelter in the states. But when the national movement assumed a mass character in British India, its influence on the people of Indian Princely states became more generalized. In fact, the first local-level popular associations were organised in the Princely states under the influence of the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movement which lasted from 1920 to 1922.

## THE POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN THE PRINCELY STATES

1. In 1920, during the **Nagpur session** of the Indian National Congress, a resolution was adopted urging the Princes of the States to grant full responsibility in their respective states. Simultaneously, while the congress was admitting residents of States to become members of the Congress, it also **warned the people of states' that they could not initiate political activity in the States under the banner of Congress, but only in their individual capacity or as members of the local political organizations**.
2. In 1920, thus, after the Non-cooperation and Khilafat movement was launched, many local organizations of the states' people came into existence under its influence.
3. States wherein Praja Mandals or **States' People's Conferences** were organised were **Mysore, Baroda, Hyderabad, the Kathiawad States, the Deccan States, Indore, Jamnagar and Nawanagar**.
4. This process of congregating came to a head in **December 1927** with the convening of the **All India States' People's Conference (AISPC)**



which saw nearly 700 attendees in the form of political workers from the States. The minds behind this convention were **Balwantrai Mehta, G.R. Abhyankar, Maniklal Kothari**. Informal links between the Congress and various Praja Mandals including the AISPC always continued to be close. In later years, the Congress even demanded that the princes' guarantee fundamental rights to their subjects.

### **ALL INDIA STATES' PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE (AISPC)**

Among the States where the first Praja Mandals or State People's Conferences were set up included Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, the Kathiawad States, the Deccan States, Jamnagar, Indore and Nawanagar. Among the leaders who emerged through this process, the more important names are those of **Balwantrai Mehta, Maniklal Kothari and C.R. Abhayankar**. It was largely at their initiative that the first all-India gathering of the people of States took place in 1927 and led to the formation of the **All India States People's Conference (AISPC)**.

The **first** All India States Peoples' Conference (AISPC) happened on **17 December, 1927** in erstwhile **Bombay**. The first session was presided by **Dewan Bahadur Ram Chandra Rao**. The conference passed resolutions which made wide ranging demands such as social, economic, and political rights; representative political institutions; free speech and press, etc. It also condemned the degenerated lifestyles of the princely rulers. The conference expressed a wish to gather support for its endeavours, by the Indian National Congress and assigned **M. Kothari and B. S. Pathik**—two senior leaders of the AISPC, to lobby and secure the same.

### **DEMAND FOR RESPONSIBLE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN THE PRINCELY STATES**

Around the 1930s, two closely associated **major developments** brought about a significant change in the situation in the Indian Princely States.

**Government of India Act, 1935:** First and foremost, the **Government of India Act 1935, projected a scheme of All India federation** wherein the Indian states would be brought directly under the constitutional relationship with British India. This was to be achieved by the setting up of a Federal Indian Legislature which would have representatives from British India as well as from the Indian Princely States. While the representatives from British India would be largely **elected** by the people, the representatives from the Indian Princely States would be **nominated** by the rulers of these States. The nominees would constitute one-third of the total members of Federal Legislatures. The whole purpose of this scheme was to use the nominated representatives of the Princely States as a **solid conservative block to counter the weight of the elected representative of British India**.

The Federation scheme was, therefore, opposed by all nationalists. The **Indian National Congress and the AISPC and other Praja mandals** demanded that the States be represented not by the Princes' nominees but by the elected representatives of the People. Thus, an urgency was created to the demand of a responsible democratic government in the Princely states.

**Assumption of the office by Congress Ministries in provinces (1937):** The second development that took place was the **assumption of the office by Congress Ministries in the majority of the Provinces in British India in 1937**. The fact that Congress is in power ignited the hopes and aspirations of many people of the Indian Princely States and acted as a catalyst to greater political activity. The princes too had to come to terms with the fact that the Congress was no longer just any political party but a party in power with the capacity to influence developments in the contiguous Indian Princely States.

These new developments brought about a **significant change in Congress policy as well towards Princely states**.



## CONGRESS POLICY TOWARDS PRINCELY STATES

### POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE

In the starting phase, **Indian National Congress**, representing the broad democratic spectrum of opinion in the country, had consciously distanced itself from the princes as well as from the political mobilization in the princely states. This **strategy of non-interference** continued even with the coming of mass mobilization in the early Gandhian phase. Factors that were responsible for policy of non-interference by Indian National Congress towards Princely states were:

1. The **nationalist leadership** did not want to fight simultaneously at **two fronts** because it was aware that princes existed only due to protection of the paramount power of the British.
2. Congress leadership was aware that the movements in princely states were linked to the appeals based on class, religious and linguistic identities and could result in more regional and religious fragmentation.

However, while generally not allowing strife around class issues, **Gandhian leadership permitted 'constructive work'** such as anti-untouchability in the Princely states. Gandhi actively **supported the Vaikom Satyagarha in Travancore in 1925**, where the demand for the opening of the road around Vaikom temple for the use of 'untouchables' was raised.

### Congress resolution for responsible government in the Princely states

The policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Indian states had been first enunciated in **1920 at Nagpur session** when a resolution calling upon the Princes to grant full responsible government in their States had been passed. On the question of organizing political movements or struggles in the Indian States, the Congress policy was more complex. **While individuals living in**

the States were free to become members of the Congress and participate in movements led by it, they were **not to carry on political activity in the Princely states in the name of the Congress**. This they could do only in their individual capacity or as members of local political organizations such as Praja Mandals, etc.

An obvious **reason for this stand of the Congress** was that the States were legally independent entities; the political conditions in Princely states was different from that of British Province. Therefore, an organization such as the Congress, which determined its politics and forms of struggle, on the basis of the conditions in British India, could not afford to be directly associated with people in the Princely States. **People of Princely states were required to build up their own strength**, advance their own political consciousness, and demonstrate their capacity to struggle for their own specific demands. Within the framework of the limitations, the Congress and Congressmen continued to extend support to the movements in the States in a variety of ways.

In the Lahore **session of the Congress in 1929**, **Jawaharlal Nehru** declared that the fate of Princely states was linked with the rest of India and that only the people of states would have the right to determine the political future of the states.

### CHANGE IN CONGRESS POLICY

Till the **Haripura Session in 1938 of the INC**, the congress had maintained that the people of the states not launch any political movements in the name of the Congress. However, witnessing the energy and the enthusiasm in the people of the princely states and their resolve to bring about a dynamic change in their societies made the Congress leadership question their own stand on the Princely states. Also, the radicals and leftists had been urging the Indian National Congress for a clearer identification with the movement in the States.



**Tripuri session (1939): Congress session at Tripuri in March 1939 passed a new resolution** announcing its new policy. It stated that the Congress has lifted off all the restrictions imposed on the peoples of the princely states pertaining to their political humdrum and that going forward the **Congress will show solidarity with the cause of the people of the princely states.**

In 1939, **Jawaharlal Nehru** was elected as the president of the **All-India States' People's Conference (AISPC) in the Ludhiana Session of AISPC.** It marked the merger of the two streams of democratic movement in princely states and British India. It also gave great impetus to the movement and became a symbol of the fusion of the movements in British India and the Indian States.

### Quit India in the Princely States

The **outbreak of the Second World War** brought about a categorical change in the political atmosphere of the day. The **Congress ministries had resigned** over the issue that the British Imperial Government had signed up Indian Soldiers for the War without the prior consent of the elected Indian Representatives. The Government lashed out with the **Defence of India Rules.** There was less tolerance for political activity even in the Princely states. The political atmosphere got momentum only after the launch of **the Quit India Movement in 1942.**

The **Congress gave a call to the people of the Princely States** to participate fully in the **all-India struggle for independence.** To their demand for responsible government was now added the demand for independence for India and for the States to become integral parts of the Indian nation. The struggle of the people in the Princely States was formally integrated with the struggle of the people in British India.

### THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION

After the Second World War was over, negotiations for the transfer of power from British to Indian hands were started. The **question of the**

**future of Indian Princely States** became of critical importance at this juncture.

The British government took the position that with their departure and the **lapse of British paramountcy,** the Indian States became legally independent entities. This would create a situation that might lead to the Balkanization of the sub-continent. The national leadership, and especially **Sardar Patel,** played a vital role at this stage and succeeded in getting the vast majority of the States to accede to the Indian Union. Many of the more rulers had realized on their own that independence of their territories as separate entities was not a realistic alternative. However, some of the States, such as **Travancore, Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir** refused to join the Indian Union till the last minute.

To illustrate the pattern of political activity in the Indian Princely States, it is important to look more closely at the course of the movements in two representative States, **Rajkot and Hyderabad.**

#### STRUGGLE IN RAJKOT

The state of Rajkot was a small one **situated in the Kathiawad Peninsula,** supporting a population of nearly 75,000 people. Its importance, however, was considerable because Rajkot city was headquarters of the Western India States Agency from where the British Political Agency carried on its dealings with an exercise supervision over all the small Princely States of the area.

#### Reign of Lakhajiraj

The **State of Rajkot was ruled by Lakhajiraj** (popularly revered as Thakore Sahib by his subjects) for nearly two decades till 1930. He was a just ruler and had **taken great care to promote the industrial, educational and political development of his state.** Lakhajiraj had encouraged popular participation in government by inaugurating the **Rajkot Praja Pratinidhi Sabha in 1923.** This assembly consisted of all democratically elected members on the basis of **universal adult franchise,** which was a rare case scenario during those times.



Despite the absolute power to veto any suggestions, **Lakhajiraj** had made it a rule to incorporate popular participation in his methods of governance. The ruler also **encouraged nationalist political activity** by giving permission to **Mansukhlal Mehta and Amritlal Sheth** to hold the first '**Kathiawad Political Conference**' in Rajkot in 1921. This conference was **presided over by Vithalbhai Pate**.

He **donated land in Rajkot for starting up a national school** that became the centre of political activity. In opposition to the British Political Resident or Agent, he wore Khadi as a symbol of the national movement. He was in awe of Gandhiji and treated him with utmost respect.

### Rajkot after Lakhajiraj

After Lakhajiraj's death, the charge of the state was passed on to his son **Dharmendra Singhji**. The new Thakore was comparatively incompetent and unambitious and looked forward to only his personal pleasures. The **power soon fell into the hands of Dewan Virawala**, who used the opportunity to concentrate all powers in his own hands. The taxes had been increased.

The state fell into such a situation that they had to sell off monopolies for basic necessities. This **led to sudden inflation in the state** which further fueled the discontentment and the resentment the public of Rajkot felt towards their new ruler who was lax in his administrative capacities. The **Pratinidhi Sabha had lapsed** and the new ruler saw no incentive in participative governance.

### The Satyagraha in Rajkot

The **ground for struggle** was already prepared over the years by the collective efforts of political groups in Rajkot and Kathiawad. The group that emerged in the leading position during these years, however, consisted of Gandhian constructive workers and their main leader was **U.N. Dhebar**.

The first struggle emerged under the leadership of **Jethalal Joshi**, a thorough Gandhian worker. In 1936, he organised nearly 800 labourers of the

state-owned cotton mill into a labour union and led a **21 days strike to demand better working conditions for the labourers**. Eventually the Durbar had to give in to their demands.

The victory of **Jethalal Joshi** further encouraged him and **U.N Dhebar** to convene the first meeting in nearly a decade's time of the '**Kathiawad Rajakiya Parishad**', in **March of 1937**. The conference was attended by nearly 15,000 attendees and **demanding responsible government, reduction in state's expenditure and reduction in taxes**.

The ruler made no move either to negotiate or concede the demands. The Parishad, therefore, launched the next phase of the struggle in August 1938 by organizing a protest against gambling. The administration had planned repression, and the protesters were beaten with lathis first by the Agency police and then by the state police. The reaction was immediate: there was a complete hartal and **Sardar Patel** presided over **a session of the Parishad on 5 September**.

**Sardar Patel** even met with Dewan Virawala on behalf of the Parishad to demand the following:

- **a committee should be set that would frame proposals for responsible government.**
- **New elections to the Pratinidhi Sabha to be held.**
- **Land revenue should be reduced by 15%.**
- **All monopolies or ijaras to be canceled.**
- **There should be a limit on the ruler's claim on the State's treasury.**

The Durbar instead of conceding to the demands of the revolting public, proposed to **install a British Officer as Dewan** to effectively deal with the situation. Thus, **Cadell was appointed in September, 1937**. Virawala changed his status to that of a Private Advisor to Thakore to continue to operate behind the platinum screen.

The **Satyagraha** had now assumed a bigger character and included withholding of land revenues, defiance of monopoly rights, boycott of all state-produced goods like textiles and



**energy.** The State banks saw massive withdrawals of finances, strikes by student unions and strikes in the state-run cotton mills. **All sources of income of the State were sought to be blocked,** like excise duties and other custom duties. Volunteers from Bombay province and British Gujarat arrived in Kathiawad to lend their support in the struggle. The logistics of this struggle were very seamlessly managed.

By November, the British were anticipating a clear victory for the Congress in Rajkot. However, **the Durbar had ignored these worries and advised the Political Department to settle the matter with Sardar Patel.**

Eventually, the **agreement that was arrived at on 26th Dec, 1938, was to put a limit on the Thakore's Privy Purse.** An appointment of a committee of ten state subjects or officials to draw up a scheme of reforms to give the people a wide range of powers was also proposed. Thakore **had an informal understanding with Sardar Patel that 7 out of 10 members of the committee would be nominated by Sardar Patel.** All political prisoners were released and the successful Satyagraha was withdrawn.

The middle ground reached **by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** and the Thakore was not at all welcomed by the British government. The **imperial government was of the opinion that Thakore should withdraw his agreement with Sardar Patel and select another set of nominees for the committee with the aid and advice of the British Resident.** Thakore subscribed to this notion and thus, the breach of agreement by the State led to **resumption of the Satyagraha on 26th Jan 1939.**

Eventually the events took a dramatic turn. **Kasturba Gandhi (Gandhiji's wife)** along-with her companion **Maniben Patel (Sardar Patel's Daughter)** were put behind bars on their arrival in Rajkot to lend support to the Satyagraha. Gandhiji too felt that the state of affairs in Rajkot were in need of being intervened into. He felt that the breach of agreement on part of the State should strongly be resisted by all Satyagrahis.

When a number of discussions with the British Resident, the Thakore and Dewan Virawala didn't yield any results, **Gandhiji gave an ultimatum of 3rd March, by which if the Durbar did not honour its agreement with Sardar then he would go on a fast unto death.** The indifference on part of the Durbar left Gandhiji no choice but to begin with his fasting. This decision saw nationwide hartals, adjournments in the legislature and a threat of resignation by the Congress. Gandhiji urged the Paramount Power to persuade Thakore to uphold his side of the agreement. Ultimately, **on 7th March, the Viceroy suggested arbitration by the Chief Justice of India, Sir Maurice Gwyer, to decide in fact whether the Thakore of Rajkot had breached the agreement or not.** This seemed to be a reasonable agreement to Gandhiji and he broke his fast. Though the court held the Thakore responsible for the breach of agreement on his part, Thakore didn't budge and continued s policy of propping up Rajputs, Muslim and depressed classes' claims to representation and refused to accept any of the proposals made by Gandhiji to accommodate their representatives while maintaining a majority of the Sardar's and the Parishad's nominees.

The situation deteriorated rapidly, especially after Jinnah and Ambedkar demanded separate representation for Muslims and Depressed Classes. The hostile demonstrations also occurred at Gandhiji's prayer meetings. The British government too refused to use its influence. At this point Gandhiji himself decided to withdraw from the situation. Gandhiji also apologized to the Viceroy and the Chief Justice for wasting their time and left Rajkot.

### Lessons of the Rajkot Satyagraha

The Rajkot Satyagraha threw light over the paradoxical situation that existed in the Princely States and that which made the task of resistance a complicated one. The ultimate protection provided by the British enabled the rulers of the States to withstand popular pressure to a considerable degree. **Despite the failure of Rajkot Satyagraha,**



the movement created a powerful impact on the people of the States, especially in Western India.

### STRUGGLE IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad was the largest princely State in India, both by virtue of its size and its population. **Osman Ali Khan was the Nizam of Hyderabad** who took control over the State in 1911 and reigned over the state till 1948. The Nizam's dominions comprised of the following linguistically distinct areas:

1. Marathi speaking areas (nearly 28%)
2. Kannada speaking areas (nearly 22%)
3. Telugu speaking areas (approximately 50%)

### Economic Conditions in Hyderabad state

Nizam's own estate was termed as "Sarf Khas". It accounted for **ten percent of the total area of the state** and the revenue from it went into directly meeting the **royal expenses**. Another 30% of the State's area was held in the form of **Jagirs**. The Jagirs were heavily burdened by a whole range of **illegal levies and exactions**. **Forced labour or vethi** was extensively practiced here.

### Cultural and Religious affairs in the State of Hyderabad

The Hindu population of the state were irked by the Nizam's cultural and religious suppression of the Hindus. Other languages of the state like **Marathi, Telugu and Kannada were neglected majorly**, any private efforts to promote these languages too were crushed in the bud. Efforts were made to promote **Urdu as an official language**, even the courts had Urdu as their court language. The **Osmania University was set up to promote Urdu** amongst the subjects. The **Arya Samaj movement was suppressed actively** and official permission was to be sought to set-up a **havan kund** for **Arya Samaj Religious Observances**.

### Political Scenarios in Hyderabad State

**Muslim population were given preferences in jobs in the administration, especially in the higher ranks.**

The Nizam's administration tried everything in its capacity to project Hyderabad as a Muslim state. This process was further accelerated **in 1927**, with the emergence of the **Ittehad ul Muslimin**. This organization had based itself on the notion of the **Nizam as the 'Royal Embodiment of Muslim Sovereignty in the Deccan'**.

### Beginning of Awakening

The beginning of political awakening came with the **Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements** in 1920-22. **National schools** were set up, **charkhas** were popularized, **propaganda made against liquor-drinking and badges** with pictures of Gandhiji and Ali brothers were sold. Public demonstrations of Hindu-Muslim unity were popular and the Khilafat movement was used as an effective forum for organizing open political activity such as in the form of mass public meetings since the Nizam hesitated to come out openly against this movement.

Following this, a series of Hyderabad Political Conferences were held in British Indian territory adjoining the state. **Responsible government, civil liberties, reduction of taxes, abolition of forced labour, freedom for religious and cultural expression** were the main demands put forward at these conferences. The **Civil disobedience Movement of 1930-32** further advanced political consciousness, as many nationalists from Hyderabad crossed over to British India to participate in the struggle. They went to jails and mingled with nationalists from other regions. These people returned to Hyderabad with a new sense of urgency and militancy.

### Andhra Mahasabha and Hyderabad State Congress

Meanwhile, the process of cultural awakening had also been under way. This took the form of different **linguistic-cultural zones** fanning their own associations. The first to come up was the **Andhra Jana Sangham**, later transformed into **Andhra Mahasabha**. This **organization of the Telugu speaking people** of the Telangana area worked for



the advancement of Telugu language and literature. **Schools, libraries, journals, Newspapers and a research society were established to promote Telugu as a language.**

Despite the Mahasabha refraining from any overt political activity till the beginning of the 1940s, the Nizam's administration would shut down its schools, libraries and newspapers started by it. In 1937, the other two linguistic cultural zones also set up their organizations: the **Maharashtra Parishad and the Kannada Parishad.**

In 1938, '**Hyderabad State Congress**' as a state-wide body claiming to represent the interests of the people of Hyderabad was founded. (It should not be mistaken to be a branch of the Indian National Congress, given the name.)

### The Satyagraha

When the Nizam didn't approve the establishment of **Hyderabad State Congress** and banned it, citing this body to be one of a communal nature and lacking Muslim representation, a **Satyagraha was launched.** The Satyagraha was started in October 1938 **by Swami Ramanand Tirtha.** He was a Marathi-speaking nationalist, who was a Gandhian in his life-style and a Nehruite in his ideology.

As a part of this Satyagraha, Satyagrahis would defy the ban orders by proclaiming themselves members of the State Congress. Large numbers of people would turn out to witness the Satyagraha and express support, and this continued for two months at the two centres of Hyderabad and Aurangabad. Other leaders who emerged on the backdrop of the Satyagraha were **Ravi Narayan Reddy and B. Yella Reddy**, who were eventually **drawn towards the Communist Party.**

At the same time, **the Arya Samaj and Hindu Civil Liberties Union** also launched a Satyagraha against the religious persecution of Arya Samaj. This Satyagraha had religious objectives and even began to take on communal overtones. There was a great danger of the two satyagrahas being confused in the

popular mind. The State administration was trying precisely to work in that direction. This was seen by the State Congress and Gandhiji. Accordingly, it was decided that in order to keep the religious and political issues separate, the **political Satyagraha of the State Congress be suspended (1938).**

There emerged during the same period the famous **Vande Mataram movement**, which led to a large-scale radicalization of students.

### Vande Mataram Movement

The authorities in the Hyderabad colleges inhibited the students from singing 'Vande Mataram' in their hostel prayer rooms. This led to a protest strike on part of the student organizations from colleges in Hyderabad city. This strike spread rapidly to other parts of the State and many students were expelled from the colleges. These students completed their education in **Nagpur University which fell under the ambit of the Congress ruled central provinces.** This movement holds a great significance since it created a bunch of young and militant cadres that provided the activists as well as the leadership of the movement for many years to come.

### Quit India Movement (QIM), Satyagraha and Hyderabad

With the onset of the Second World War, **Swami Ramanand Tirtha** again launched a Satyagraha and was soon put behind bars. **Gandhiji** was looking forward to **an all-India struggle** that would subsume all the struggles. The Quit India Movement was initiated in 1942. It was made clear that all Indians were required to participate, with no distinction made between the people of British India and those of the Princely States.

The movements in the Princely states were now to be not only for responsible government but for the independence of India and the integration of the princely states with British India.

The **QIM got a huge response from the youth of Hyderabad.** Many people all over the state offered Satyagraha. A batch of women too offered



Satyagraha and Sarojini Naidu was arrested later. Slogans like 'Gandhi Ka Charkha Chalana Padega, Goron ko London Jana Padega' became popular. However, the QIM saw no sympathizers from the Communist Parties and their leaders, since this segment of ideology had a pro-War stance (The Communists Party of India adopted the people's war line – which asked for support to Britain in the anti-Fascist War. In pursuance of this line, the Communists did not officially support the Quit India movement).

In the years 1945-46 a lot of peasant struggles took place in the state of Hyderabad. The main targets were the forced grain levy, the practice of veth begar, illegal exactions and illegal seizures of the land. Though the resistance was being curtailed strongly, it instilled amongst the peasants of Telangana a new confidence in their ability to resist.

### The Last Phase

On June 4, 1947, Viceroy Mountbatten announced that India would be decolonized shortly. Upon learning this on June 12, 1947, the Nizam declared that he would become a sovereign monarch when the British Paramountcy ceased to exist. He had no intentions of acceding to the Indian Union. The State congress along-with the support of the Indian National Congress took a bold stand against the Nizam's moves.

On Aug 7th, a struggle was formally launched which was to be celebrated as 'Join Indian Union Day'. This initiative was welcomed by an enormous response, meetings held in towns and villages across the state of Hyderabad to defy any bans by the Nizam. The workers and Students from Hyderabad went on strike.

The government intensified repression. Beatings and arrests followed. On Aug 13th, the Nizam banned the ceremonial hoisting of the Indian National Flag. On Independence Day, 15 August 1947, Swami Ramanand Tirtha and his colleagues were arrested.

Despite the arrest of some leaders, the people of the state kept the movement alive. The Indian

National Flag was hoisted in Sultan Bazaar, by the Hyderabad students. Trains decorated with national flags would steam into Hyderabad from the neighboring Indian territories. The women's batch was led by Brij Rani and Yashoda Ben.

The Nizam and his administration cracked down heavily on the movement. The storm troopers of the Ittihad ul Muslimin, the Razakars, were given the authority to act as a para-military force to attack the peoples' struggle, by the Nizam. These Razakars laid out armed raids on the protesting public. On Nov 29th 1947, the Nizam signed a Standstill Agreement with the Indian Government. However, the repression was still intensified and the Razakar menace had become very acute.

### Armed Resistance and the Intervention of Indian Army

The movement now took a different form, that of armed resistance. The State Congress set up camps on the State's borders, and organized raids on custom's outposts, the police stations and Razakar camps. But inside the State, and especially in the Nalgonda, Warangal and Khammam districts of Telengana, it was the Communists who took the lead in organizing armed resistance. They organized the peasants into dalams, gave the training in using arms, to attack the Razakars.

The next stage was reached when the Indian Army attacked Hyderabad on 13 September 1948, secured the surrender of the Nizam, and integrated the State with the Indian Union. The Indian Army was welcomed by the people, including the peasants, as an army of liberation. There was great jubilation and the national flag was hoisted with great joy and sense of freedom.

### EVALUATION OF STRUGGLE IN PRINCELY STATES

The case study of Hyderabad and Rajkot reveals that the political tools like mass civil disobedience or Satyagraha which showed great results in British India, couldn't show the same effectiveness or



viability in the Princely States. The political space for hegemonic politics was very small given the lack of civil liberties or lack of representative institutions.

Also, **the ultimate protection provided to these princely states by the British Government enabled the rulers to withstand popular pressure.** As a result, there was a greater tendency amongst the rulers of princely states to resort to unconstitutional means and violent methods of attack on public agitations. This was witnessed not just in the states of Rajkot or Hyderabad, but also in states of Travancore, Patiala and Orissa among others. This also meant that the communist and the leftist

groups got a better stronghold and were able to grow as a political force in these states due to their affinity towards violent forms of struggle. Here too, the examples of States of Travancore, Hyderabad, Patiala and Orissa give a striking demonstration.

The difference in the political conditions prevailing in British India and those witnessed in the Princely States, give a clear indication as to why the Congress was initially reluctant to merge the movements in the States with those in British India. Political acumen talks about deploying only fool-proof techniques to bring about the results one wants to see.

## RELATION BETWEEN PRINCELY



As we have discussed earlier, the Congress won the **1937 elections** and formed the popular ministries in the six provinces where it had won the majority. This changed the balance of power within the country vis-a-vis the colonial authorities. Also, the growth of left-wing parties and ideas led to a growing militancy within the nationalist ranks. This stage seemed perfect for the revival of the national movement. However, at this time the Congress was strife with internal rivalries and also had to undergo a crisis at the top leadership.

The Second World War, which began in Europe on **1st September 1939**, provided the necessary opportunity to revive the national movement. However, the Indian leaders were not in favour of such opportunism, as it would harm the cause of the democratic and anti-fascist forces.

## CONGRESS CRISIS ON METHOD OF STRUGGLE

In the second half of 1930's (**post Civil disobedience movement**), Gandhiji was dissatisfied with the rivalries and minor disputes among the leaders of the Congress. He also believed that there was **rising corruption and indiscipline** among the Britishers. For that the Congress needed to first straighten out its house before any mass movement could resume; in addition, he thought the masses were not in the mood for a fight, whereas some people believed that the fight should go on.

## GANDHIJI'S VIEWS ON LAUNCHING OF MASS STRUGGLE

Gandhiji felt the masses were not ready for another struggle at the moment. He believed that Congress should first address its issues (mentioned below) before the movement could again be launched.

- **Corruption and Indiscipline:** There was rising corruption and indiscipline in the organization.

- **Rivalries:** There were rivalries and petty squabbles among the Congress leaders
- **Unethical Practises:** There were issues of bogus membership. Some people employed unethical means in trying to get into the congressional committees and controlling them.

## HARIPURA SESSION (1938)

The Indian National Congress held **its 51st session at Haripura** (Gujarat) in February 1938. This session was presided over by Subash Chandra Bose. **Bose did not agree with Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress on many aspects of the struggle for freedom which were as follows:**

- **Dominion Status:** Bose opposed the Motilal Nehru Report which sought dominion status for India.
- **Poorna Swaraj:** Bose supported the goal of full independence. He announced the formation of the Independence League in this direction and endorsed the 'Poorna Swaraj' resolution adopted at the Lahore Congress session.
- **Civil Disobedience Movement:** Bose actively participated in the Salt Satyagraha Movement in 1930 and was arrested. He was completely against the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement and the signing of the **Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1931**, especially as the government refused to negotiate on the death sentence for Bhagat Singh and his associates.

Bose believed that **Congress ministries in the provinces had immense revolutionary potential**. Subhas Chandra Bose in his Presidential address said, "**the objective of the Congress is an independent and United India** where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage, and where all the elements in the nation may cooperate together for the common good and the advancement of the people of India".

Bose announced in this session a clear goal of resisting the colonial government's unwanted



Federal Scheme (introduced in the Government of India Act, 1935) through peaceful means. The session **witnessed an intense debate** on the **issue of the princely states**. Finally, **Congress announced its aim to attain complete independence for the whole of India, including the princely states**.

Congress also demanded a responsible government and the guarantee of civil liberties in the states. The session also supported the **release of all political prisoners**. Taking into consideration of the recent growth of the peasant movements, **Congress reiterated its recognition of the right of Kisan Sabhas to organise themselves in unions**

But the **Congress also declared** that they will **not associate with any activities of the Kisan Sabhas** that might be incompatible with INC's basic principles. Bose called for closer cooperation between the Congress, Trade Union Congress, and the peasant organizations.

In the following months, the international situation was highly disturbed; there were clear signs that Europe was going to be embroiled in war.

### TRIPURI SESSION (1939)

#### **Election of President**

In 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose forwarded his candidature for the post of President by stating that he represented the **'new ideas, ideologies, problems and programs'** that had come out of 'the progressive sharpening of the anti-imperialist struggle in India'. On this **Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kripalani**, and four other members of the Congress Working Committee issued a counter statement. They declared that the talk of ideologies, programs, and policies was irrelevant in the elections of a Congress president since these were evolved by the various Congress bodies such as the AICC and the Working Committee. They stated that the position of the Congress President was like

that of a constitutional head who represented and symbolized the unity and solidarity of the nation. With the blessings of **Gandhiji**, these leaders put up **Pattabhi Sitaramayya** as a candidate for the President post. The election took place on **29 January 1939** and **Subhas Bose won the election by 1580 votes against 1377**. Gandhiji declared that 'Sitaramayya's defeat was 'more mine than his.'

**This election created an internal strife in Congress for the following reasons:**

- **Propaganda of Bose:** During the election, Gandhiji, Sardar Patel and the majority of the top Congress leadership were labeled as right wing by SubhasChandra Bose. He openly accused them of seeking a compromise with the government on the federation issue. He urged Congressmen to vote for a leftist and genuine anti-federation candidate.
- **Resentment:** The Congress leaders, who were labeled as compromisers, resented such charges. After Bose's election, they felt that they could not work with a president who had publicly cast aspersions on their nationalist Bonafede. As a result, twelve of the Working Committee members resigned from their positions.
- **Nehru's Stand:** Jawaharlal Nehru did not resign from the Working Committee as he did not like the idea of confronting Bose publicly. He was unhappy with Bose's aspersions on his colleagues. He did not agree that the fight was between the Left and the Right.

#### **The session**

**In March 1939, Tripuri session** (near Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh) was Presided by Subash Chandra Bose. The **Bose-Gandhiji ideology crisis reached its climax in this session with major differences** over the launch of mass movement and the formation of Congress Working Committee.



### Differences over the launch of Mass Movement

**Bose:** Bose was in favor of giving a six-month ultimatum to Britain to grant the national demand of independence. If the ultimatum was rejected, he favoured the launch of a mass civil disobedience movement. According to him, congress was strong enough just as the masses were ready for such a struggle. Congress should take advantage of the international crisis amidst the fear of the Second World War to fight for independence.

**Gandhiji:** Gandhiji was firm in the belief that it was not the time for such ultimatums as neither the Congress nor the masses were yet ready for struggle. Gandhi was aware that the existing communal discord and class strife along with a lack of unified vision would undermine any movement.

### Differences over the Formation of Working Committee

**Bose:** Bose refused to nominate a new working committee on his own. Bose insisted that the Working Committee should be representative of the new radical trends and groups.

**Gandhiji:** Govind Ballabh Pant passed a resolution reaffirming faith in Gandhian policies and asking Bose to nominate the working committee "in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji". This resolution was passed without opposition from the socialists or the communists. However, Gandhiji stated that he would not like to impose a working committee on the president. He felt that, since Bose was the president, he should choose the members of the working committee and lead the Congress.

### The Crisis and Resignation of Bose

Subash Chandra Bose knew that he could not lead the organization on his own, but he was also not willing to accept the leadership of the majority. To place the best construction on his policy, he wanted Gandhiji to be the leader of the coming struggle. However, Bose wanted Gandhiji to follow the strategy and tactics laid down by him and the left-wing parties and groups.

Gandhiji was not willing to lead the Congress struggle based on the radical lines preferred by Bose. Gandhiji would either lead the Congress on the basis of his own strategy and style of politics or surrender the position of the leader.

Subash Bose could also not get the support of the Congress Socialists and the Communists as they were not willing to divide the national movement and felt that the unity of the Congress must be preserved at all costs. They preferred a united Congress led by Gandhi as the national struggle was of utmost importance.

In these circumstances, Bose resigned from the president's post in **April 1939**. This led to the election of **Rajendra Prasad** as president of Congress. The crisis in Congress had been overcome for a moment.

### POST TRIPURI SESSION

#### Formation of Forward Block (May 1939)

In **May 1939**, Bose and his followers formed the Forward Bloc (as a new party within the Congress). Bose gave a call for an **all-India protest on July 9, 1939**, against an All India Congress Committee (AICC) resolution. As a result, the Congress Working Committee took disciplinary action against Bose. In August 1939, Congress removed Bose from the post of president of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. It also debarred Bose from holding any elective office in the Congress for a period of three years.



## SECOND WORLD WAR

On **September 1, 1939**, Germany attacked Poland – the action that led to the Second World War. On **September 3, 1939**, Britain declared war against Germany and the British Government of India declared India's support for the war without consulting Indian opinion. **Governor-General Lord Linlithgow** made a Proclamation of Emergency in India due to commencement of the Second World War, thereby assuming **control over provincial governments**.

### RESPONSE FROM INDIAN NATIONALIST AND BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

Although the Congress objected to the British unilateral decision to enlist India in the war without consulting the Indians, it decided to support the war effort under certain conditions. The Congress' hostility to Fascism, Nazism, militarism, and

imperialism had been far more consistent than the British record. The Indian offer to help with the war effort came **with two basic conditions**.

1. After the war, a constituent assembly should be called **to determine the political structure of a free India**.
2. The Centre should immediately establish some form of **genuinely responsible government**.

Linlithgow, the viceroy, turned down the offer. The Congress argued that the above conditions were required to win public support for the war.

### CWC Meeting at Wardha (Sep, 1939)

Subhas Bose and other socialists, such as Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan had been invited by the Congress to attend the Wardha meeting so that different opinions could be discussed (on India's support to the British during Second World War) had no sympathy for either side in the war.

### Different Perspectives on the question of Indian support to British war efforts

#### Gandhiji's Stand on British Government

Gandhiji spoke in favor of the Allied countries giving **unqualified support**. He created a major difference between the democratic Western countries Nazi and fascist totalitarianism in Europe. He asserted that he refused to **put the British government in a bad light during the war**.

#### Jawaharlal Nehru's stand on British Government

Jawaharlal Nehru was not willing to accept the opinion of Gandhi or the socialists. In his mind he was clear about the difference between **democratic values and fascism**. According to him, justice was on the side of England, France, and Poland, but he also believed that England and France were imperial powers and that the war was the result of the internal contradictions of capitalism since World War-I's conclusion. Therefore, he advised **against India's participation** until India herself was liberated. Nevertheless, no immediate mass movement was to be initiated in response to England's difficulties.

#### Subhash Bose and other socialists stand on British Government

They believed that both sides in the conflict (in Second World War) were imperialists who were fighting for the protection of their colonial possessions and the acquisition of new lands to colonize. As a result, they believed that **nationalists should not support either side**. In fact, they believed it was the perfect opportunity to **start a civil disobedience movement**, by taking advantage of the situation and snatching freedom from Britain.



**Final resolution of the working committee**

The attack on Poland by Germany was denounced by the Congress Working Committee (CWC). In the end **three facts were agreed upon;**

- **First**, India could not be a party to a war apparently fought for democratic freedom while that freedom was denied to India;
- **Second**, if Britain was fighting for democracy and freedom, it should be demonstrated by ending colonial rule and establishing full democracy in India; and
- **Third**, the government should **declare its war objectives as soon as possible** as well as how the principles of democracy were to be applied to India after the Second World War.

The Congress leadership wanted "to give every chance to the viceroy and the British Government"

**Government Response**

The answer from the government was unfavorable. **Viceroy Linlithgow refused to define Britain's war aims beyond stating that Britain was resisting aggression.** As an immediate measure, the viceroy offered to set up a consultative committee whose advice might be sought by the Government whether it felt it necessary to do so. The British also promised to consult **Indian princes and representatives of other communities, parties,** and interests in the future to see how the **Act of 1935** might be changed.

**Linlithgow's remarks** were not an isolated incident, but rather a component of broader British strategy to "use the war to reclaim the lost ground from the Congress" by inciting a conflict between the Congress and the government and then taking advantage of the unique opportunity to enact harsh laws.

By revising the 1935 Act, the already possessed emergency powers over provincial affairs before the War was officially declared. On the day the War was declared, the **Defense of India ordinance went into effect**, limiting civil rights. A **top-secret Draft Revolutionary Movement Ordinance**, intended to unleash damaging pre-emptive strikes against the Congress, had been developed in May 1940.

The British administration might then request assistance from the Allied forces deployed in India. By portraying an aggressive Congress as being pro-Japan and pro-Germany, it may potentially gain

an unusual degree of liberal and leftist support worldwide. **The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill** and **Secretary of State, Zetland**, who referred to the Congress as an exclusively Hindu organization, both fully endorsed the reactionary policies of British India.

It became evident that the British administration was prepared **to treat the Congress as an adversary and had no plans to lessen its grip either during or after the war.**

**World War-II and Resignation of Congress Ministries (Oct 1939)**

Congress ministers didn't like Governor-General's unilateral declaration of India's participation in World War-II without the consultation of Indians. In protest, the Congress ministries in the Provinces resigned in October 1939. Congress took the position that Indians should be consulted before taking such a momentous decision on their behalf. Even the Socialists and the Communists at this stage also were against India's participation in an imperialist war.

**Debate on the Question of Immediate Mass Satyagraha**

Following Linlithgow's declaration in **October 1939**, the discussion of an impending mass movement reopened. **Gandhi and his allies opposed starting a mass struggle** right away because they believed that the riots could break out due to religious sensitivities and lack of Hindu-



Muslim unity; the Congress organization was in disarray; and the general people were not prepared for a fight.

Instead, Gandhiji recommended **strengthening the Congress organization**, engaging in political work among the public, and engaging in negotiations **until all options for a negotiated settlement had been explored**. The conflict wouldn't start until then.

In **January 1940**, Linlithgow indicated, "Dominion status of Westminster variety, after the war, is the goal of British policy in India."

### **RAMGARH SESSION (MARCH 1940)**

In March 1940, the Congress met in Ramgarh, with **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** serving as its president. The Congress protested against the declaration of India as a belligerent country without any reference to the people and stated that the British government was carrying on the war fundamentally for imperialist ends. The party also declared that **nothing short of complete independence is acceptable**.

Indian freedom could not be in the form of dominion or any other status within the imperial structure. Sovereignty must rest with the people, whether in the princely states or the provinces. It was also decided that **"Congress would resort to civil disobedience as soon as the Congress organisation is considered fit enough"**.

#### **Day of deliverance**

After the resignation of Congress ministries, the provincial governors suspended the legislatures and took charge of the provincial administration. The **Muslim League** celebrated the end of Congress rule as a day of deliverance on **22 December 1939**. On that day, the League passed resolutions in various places against Congress for its alleged atrocities against Muslims. The demonstration of Nationalist Muslims was dubbed as anti-Islamic and denigrated. It was in this atmosphere that the **League passed its resolution on 26 March 1940 in Lahore demanding a separate nation for Muslims**. The Muslim League

resolved that the British government before leaving India should effect the partition of the country into Indian union and Pakistan.

### **Idea of Pakistan**

Though the idea of Pakistan came from the Muslim League platform in 1940 it had been conceived ten years earlier by the **poet-scholar Mohammad Iqbal**. At the League's annual conference at **Allahabad (1930)**, Iqbal expressed his wish to see **a consolidated North-west Indian Muslim State**. It was then articulated forcefully by **Rahmat Ali**, a **Cambridge student**. The basis of League's demand was its "Two Nation Theory" which first came from Sir Wazir Hasan in his presidential address at the Bombay session of League in 1937. He said, "the Hindus and Mussalmans inhabiting this vast continent are not two communities but should be considered two nations in many respects."

### **AUGUST OFFER (1940)**

During the course of the second world war, Hitler's extraordinary success and the fall of Belgium, the Netherlands, and France compelled England to be lenient towards the demands of the Congress. Gandhi and Nehru fiercely opposed the notion of exploiting Britain's position during the war. As a compromise, the Congress asked the British government for permission to form an interim government during the war. However, the government had no interest. **In August 1940**, the government proposed the **August Offer** in an effort to secure India's participation in the war effort. **Viceroy Linlithgow** made the August Offer public.

### **MAJOR PROPOSALS IN THE AUGUST OFFER**

- **Dominion Status:** The British agreed to dominion status as the objective for India.
- **Indian Representation:** The expansion of the viceroy's executive council would have a majority of Indians. These Indians would be drawn from major political parties.



- **Constituent Assembly:** The British would set up a constituent assembly after the war, where **mainly Indians** would decide the constitution according to their social, economic, and political conceptions.
- **Consent of Minorities:** The British assured that no future constitution would be adopted without the consent of minorities.

### RESPONSES FOR AUGUST OFFER

**Congress rejected the August Offer.** The Congress rejected this offer because:

- There was no suggestion for a national government.
- It encouraged anti-Congress forces.
- **Nehru** said, "Dominion status concept is dead as a doornail."
- **Gandhiji** said that the August declaration had widened the gulf between the nationalists and the British rulers.

**Muslim League** welcomed the assurance to the Minorities and reiterated its position that partition was the only solution to the deadlock.

### INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA

The government was systematically placing many Congress employees under preventive arrest, particularly those with socialist or leftist leanings. All local leaders were under surveillance, and many labor leaders and young people were detained. At this point, Congress was convinced that the British would not alter their India policy. **Gandhi made the decision to initiate Individual Satyagraha.**

The very reason for confining the movement to individual participation was that **neither Gandhi nor the Congress wished to hamper the War effort** of the British and this could not have been the case in a mass movement. The satyagrahis were handpicked by Gandhi and their demand was restricted.

### OBJECTIVES OF INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA

- To demonstrate that nationalist tolerance was not a result of weakness;
- To show that the people were uninterested in the war and saw no difference between Nazism and the double autocracy that ruled India; and
- To give the government another chance to accept Congress' demands peacefully.

### METHOD OF INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA

- Demand was restricted to asserting their freedom of speech to preach against participation in the war.
- The chosen Satyagrahi was to inform the District Magistrate of the date, time and place of the protest.
- On reaching there at the appointed time, and publicly declare the following: "It is wrong to help the British War effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war efforts with non-violent resistance" and offer arrest.

### START AND END OF SATYAGRAHA

**Acharya Vinoba Bhave** inaugurated the Satyagraha on 17 October 1940 by delivering an anti-war speech at the **Paunar ashram in Maharashtra**. Bhave had been personally selected by Gandhi for this. **Nehru** was the second to offer individual Satyagraha. Between November 1940 and February 1941 many prominent Congressmen went to jail, but due to the limited nature of participation and restrictions imposed on Congressmen by Gandhi the movement could not achieve much.

In some cases even the Congressmen were not very willing. **In Bihar**, for instance, many Congressmen selected to participate in Satyagraha resisted giving up their municipal positions. Either they refused to comply or they "were extremely slow to court arrest."

In **December 1941**, the **Congress Working Committee** decided to suspend the movement. By this time the Second World War had taken a new



turn. The British were facing defeat after and the Japanese forces had overrun South-East Asia. USSR had been attacked by the Nazis and there were pressures on the British from USSR, USA and China to reconsider their India policy. **The Government released many political prisoners. After Rangoon's fall to the Japanese, the British decided to dispatch the Cripps Mission to India.**

#### Rise of Japan in Asia during Second World War

The year 1941 was bad for the allied forces. **France, Poland, Belgium, Norway and Holland** had fallen to Germany and Great Britain was facing destruction as well. Of far more significance to India was Japan's march into South-east Asia. This was happening alongside the attack on Pearl Harbour, where Japanese war-planes bombed the American port on December 7, 1941. **US President F.D. Roosevelt** and **Chinese President Chiang Kai-Shek** were concerned with halting Japan on its march.

India, thus, came on their radar and the two put pressure on British Prime Minister Churchill to ensure cooperation for the war from the Indian people. By the end of 1941, the Japanese forces had stormed through the **Philippines, Indo-China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Burma** and were waiting to knock at India's doors in the North-

**East.** The way the South East Asian region fell raised **concerns to Britain and the Indian National Congress**. The British forces ran without offering any resistance. Churchill was worried that Calcutta and Madras might fall in Japanese hands. Similar thoughts ran in the minds of the leaders of the Congress too and they too were desperate to seek an honourable way out to offer cooperation in the war effort.

It was in this situation that the **Congress Working Committee, in December 1941**, passed a resolution offering cooperation with the war effort on condition that Britain promised independence to India after the war and transfer power to Indians in a substantial sense immediately.

## CRIPPS MISSION (MARCH 1942)

A delegation headed by Sir Stafford Cripps reached India in March 1942. Cripps, a Labour party representative in the War cabinet under Churchill, was chosen to head the delegation and lent credibility to the mission. Before setting out to India, **he announced that British policy in India aimed at 'the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India'.**

### REASONS BEHIND ARRIVAL OF CRIPPS MISSION

- **Japan's Advances towards the East:** Japan occupied Rangoon in March 1942. War was brought to India's doorstep. Winston Churchill, then the British Prime Minister, feared that Burma, Ceylon, Calcutta, and Madras might fall into enemy hands.
- **Pressure from World Leaders:** The war situation worsened with the successes of the Axis powers. **Churchill** was pressured by **President Roosevelt of the United States, President Chiang Kai-shek of China**, and the leaders of the British Labour Party to seek the active participation of Indians in the war.
- **Response of Indian Nationalists:** Indian nationalists had agreed to support the Allied cause in the war if the British transfers substantial power immediately and give complete independence after the war.

Amidst this situation, the British had sent the Cripps Mission to secure Indian cooperation in the war in return for constitutional reforms.

### CRIPPS PROPOSAL

- **Dominion Status:** The Indian Union would be set up as a dominion. The Indian Union would be free to determine its relations with the Commonwealth and to join the United Nations and other international organizations.
- **Constituent Assembly:** A constituent assembly would be formed following the conclusion of



the war to draft a new constitution. Some of the people in this assembly would be chosen by the provincial assemblies using proportional representation, and other people would be chosen by the princes.

- **New Constitution:** The British government would accept the new constitution subject to two conditions:
  - i. Any province not willing to join the Union could have a separate constitution and form a separate Union, and
  - ii. The new constitution-making body and the British government would negotiate a treaty to effect the transfer of power and to safeguard racial and religious minorities.
- **Defence:** For the present the British would continue to exercise sole control over the defence of the country and the governor-general's powers would remain intact.

### RESPONSES TO THE CRIPPS PROPOSALS

**Cripps Proposal were rejected by almost all the Indian parties.**

#### Congress

The **Congress** did not want to rely on future promises. It wanted a responsible Government with full powers and also a control over the country's defence. **Congress objected due to following reasons:**

- **Offer of Dominion Status-** instead of a provision for complete independence;
- **Nominees-**Representation of the princely states by nominees and not by elected representatives;
- **Right to provinces to secede-**as this went against the national unity principle; and
- **Absence of any immediate power transfer plan-** along with the absence of any real share in defense.
- **Governor General Supremacy-**The governor-general's supremacy had been retained, and the demand that the governor-general is only the constitutional head had not been accepted.

#### Gandhiji

He termed the proposal "as a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank."

#### Muslim League

The **Muslim League** demanded a definite declaration by the British in favour of the creation of a separate state for the Muslims, and also seats for the **Muslim League on a 50:50 basis** with the Congress in the **Interim Government**. **Muslim league objected due to:**

- **Single Union-**The League criticised the idea of a single Indian Union;
- **Constituent Assembly-**It did not like the machinery for the creation of a constituent assembly and the procedure to decide on the accession of provinces to the Union; and
- **Pakistan-**The League thought that the proposals denied the Muslims the right to self-determination and the creation of Pakistan.

#### Other groups

The **Depressed Classes, the Sikhs, the Indian Christians and the Anglo-Indians** demanded more safeguards for their communities. **Hindu Mahasabha** criticised the basis of the right to secede. Liberals-considered the secession proposals to be against the unity and security of India.

Thus, the **Indians were not appeased by the Cripps Mission**. The British only engaged in this activity to demonstrate to the world that they cared about Indian sentiments; they did nothing of substance.

### REASONS BEHIND FAILURE OF CRIPPS MISSION

- **Government Refusal to Share Power:** The British Government refused to accept the demand for the immediate transfer of effective power to the Indians and for a real share in the responsibility for the defense of India.
- **Incapacity to Cripps:** An important reason for the failure of the negotiations was the



incapacity of Cripps to bargain and negotiate. He had been told not to go beyond the Draft Declaration.

- **Apathy of British Leaders:** Churchill, the Secretary of State, Amery, the Viceroy, Linlithgow, and the Commander-in-Chief, Wavell, did not want Cripps to succeed and constantly opposed and sabotaged his efforts to accommodate Indian opinion.
- **Objections from Indian Nationalists:** The majority of Indian Nationalists objected to the Cripps Proposals. Nehru pointed out that the "existing structure and autocratic powers

would remain and a few of us will become the viceroy's liveried camp followers and look after canteens and the like".

Stafford Cripps returned home in the middle of April 1942 without any results. This angered and frustrated Indians. Though Indian Nationalists still sympathized with the anti-fascists, especially the people of China and the Soviet people, they felt that the existing situation in the country had become intolerable. Indian Nationalists felt that the time had come for a final assault on imperialism. Thus began the mass struggle in the form of **Quit India Movement in August 1942**.



After Cripps' departure, Gandhiji took it upon himself to steer the Indian National Congress into action (May, 1942). **At Wardha, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution urging complete nonviolent non-cooperation with any foreign forces invading India in July 1942.**

## CONGRESS MEET AT WARDHA

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress met at Wardha on **July 14, 1942**. **The purpose of the meeting was to determine the following courses of action:**

- The failure of the Cripps Mission;
- The arrival of Japanese armies on Indian borders;
- The rising prices and shortages in food supplies
- The different opinions within the Congress

The meeting resolved to launch a mass civil disobedience movement. **C. Rajagopalachari and Bhulabhai Desai** who had reservations against launching a movement at that time **resigned from the Congress Working Committee**. Nehru, despite being among those who did not want a movement then bound himself with the majority's decision in the Working Committee.

The Congress made it clear that the demand to quit India did not require the British and their allies to immediately withdraw from India. Nonetheless, this resulted in the British immediately recognizing India's independence. The Congress Working Committee adopted the **Quit India Resolution on July 14, which was scheduled to be ratified at the August AICC meeting in Bombay.**

### Do or Die slogan

The futility that marked the Cripps mission had turned both **Gandhi and Nehru** sour with the British than any time in the past. **Gandhi expressed** this in a **press interview** on May 16, 1942 where he said: 'Leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy. This ordered disciplined anarchy should go and if

if there is complete lawlessness, I would risk it.' **Gandhi** called upon the people to 'Do or Die' and called the movement he launched from there as a '**fight to the finish**'.

## QUIT INDIA RESOLUTION

On **August 8, 1942**, the Quit India Resolution was ratified at a **Congress meeting in Gowalia Tank, Bombay**. After extensive thought and consideration on the international and national situation, the Congress issued the following appeal to the Indian people: "They must remember that nonviolence is the foundation of this movement. There may come a time when it is impossible to issue orders or for those orders to reach the people, and when no Congress Committee can function. When this occurs, every man and woman participating in this movement must operate independently within the four corners of the issued general instructions."

### The meeting also resolved to:

- Demand an immediate end to British rule in India.
- Declare commitment of free India to defend itself against all types of Fascism and imperialism.
- Form a provisional Government of India after British withdrawal.
- Sanction a civil disobedience movement against British rule.

**Gandhiji** urged all sections to join the Movement and emphasized that "every Indian who desires and strives for freedom must be his own guide." His message was '**do or die**'. **Consequently, the Quit India Movement began.**

## QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

After the Quit India Resolution was passed, the British government was in no mood to either negotiate with the Congress or wait for the movement to be formally launched. The Congress called for the overthrow of the British, but it did not clarify a specific course of action for the people to follow. The British Indian Government had been



preparing to crush the Movement. On the morning of **August 9, all prominent Congress leaders were arrested, including Gandhi**. The arrest of the leaders shocked the general public, who took to the streets in protest.

#### **Gandhiji message to the masses before his arrest**

**Before Gandhi's arrest on 9 August 1942**, he had given the following message to the country:

Everyone is free to go the fullest length under Ahimsa to complete deadlock by strikes and other non-violent means. Satyagrahis must go out to die not to live. They must seek and face death. It is only when individuals go out to die that the nation will survive, Kareng Ya Mareng (do or die).

**But while giving this call Gandhi had once again stressed on non-violence:** Let every non-violent soldier of freedom write out the slogan 'do or die' on a piece of paper or cloth and stick it on his clothes, so that in case he died in the course of offering Satyagraha, he might be distinguished by that sign from other elements who do not subscribe to non-violence.

#### **SPREAD OF THE MOVEMENT**

Gandhi's arrest, along with those of other Congress leaders, sparked unprecedented demonstrations across the nation. In urban areas, there were **hartals, demonstrations, and processions**. The Tata Steel Plant in Jamshedpur was closed down by the striking workers for 13 days beginning August 20. The textile workers in Ahmedabad struck work for more than three months. Industrial towns witnessed strikes for varied periods across India.

Since all the recognised leaders -- central, provincial or local -- had been arrested, the **young**

#### **Parallel Governments**

Place	Timeline	Leadership	Remarks
Ballia	In August 1942 for a week	Chittu Pandey	Chittu Pandey got many Congress leaders released

**and more militant cadres -- particularly students** - those with socialist leanings assumed local leadership positions in their respective regions.

#### **Outbreak of Violence**

Initially, the Movement was founded on nonviolent principles. It was the government's **repressive policy** that incited the people to violence. **People devised their own methods of struggle, displacing the Gandhian message** of nonviolent resistance to the background. These included:

- Attacks on government buildings, police stations and post offices,
- Attacks on railway stations, and sabotaging rail lines,
- Cutting off the telegraph wires, telephones and electric power lines.
- Disrupting road traffic by destroying bridges
- Students reacted by striking in schools and colleges, marching in processions, writing and distributing **illegal news sheets (Patrika)**, and acting as couriers for underground networks.
- In Ahmedabad, Bombay, Jamshedpur, Ahmednagar, and Poona, workers went on strike

The majority of these acts of violence were carried out to restrain the police and military from moving, which were being used by the government to stifle the Movement.

#### **Parallel Governments**

In many areas, the Indian British government lost all control and the **people established Parallel governments in few parts of the Country**. An instance of this was the 'Tamluk Jatiya Sarkar' in the Midnapore district in Bengal that lasted until September 1944. We cite a few such cases:



Place	Timeline	Leadership	Remarks
Tamluk (Midnapore)	From December 1942 to September 1944	Satish Chandra Samanta, Sushil Kumar Dhara, Ajoy Mukherjee and Matangini Hazra	<b>Parallel Government was known as Jatiya Sarkar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertook cyclone relief work.</li> <li>• Sanctioned grants to schools.</li> <li>• Supplied paddy from the rich to the poor.</li> <li>• Organised Vidyut Vahinis.</li> </ul>
Satara	Mid-1943 to 1945	Y.B. Chavan, Nana Patil	<b>Parallel government was known as Prati Sarkar.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village libraries and Nyayadan Mandals were organised.</li> <li>• Prohibition campaigns were carried on and 'Gandhi marriages' were organised</li> </ul>

### Story of Satara, 1943

From the late nineteenth century, a non-Brahman movement, which opposed the caste system and landlordism, had developed in Maharashtra. This movement established links with the national movement by the 1930s. In 1943, some of the younger leaders in the Satara district of Maharashtra set up a parallel government (**Prati Sarkar**), with **volunteer corps (Seba Dals)** and **village units (tufan Dals)**. They ran people's courts and organised constructive work. Dominated by kunbi peasants and supported by dalits, the Satara Prati Sarkar functioned till the elections of 1946, despite government repression and, in the later stages, Congress disapproval.

### Radio Broadcast and Underground Activity

Another prominent feature of the Quit India movement was the use of Radio by the rebels. The press being censored, the rebels set up a clandestine **radio broadcast system from Bombay**. The transmitter was shifted from one place to another in and around the city. **Usha Mehta** was the force behind the clandestine radio operations and its broadcast was heard as far away as Madras.

Also, many nationalists **went underground and took to underground activities**. **Rammanohar**

**Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Mehta, Biju Patnaik, Chhotubhai Puranik, Achyut Patwardhan, Sucheta Kripalani and R.P. Goenka** were the main figures engaging in underground activity.

### Role of Underground Movement

- To keep up the morale of masses by providing a line of command and a source of guidance and leadership to activists all over the country in the absence of nationalist leaders due to arrest.
- An all-India underground leadership also collected and distributed money as well as material like bombs, arms, and dynamite to underground groups all over the country.

### RESPONSES AND TRENDS IN THE MOVEMENT

**"Quit India"** was the battle cry of the day, but responses to the Movement were varied. In many industrial centers, the Working Class went on strike. These included Mumbai, Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Jashedpur, and Poona. The 9 August strike in Delhi was prompted by workers taking to the streets. In the majority of these cities, however, the strikes were brief, with the exception of Ahmedabad, where they lasted approximately three months.



## Extent of Mass Participation

Youth, particularly school and college students, remained at the forefront. **Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kripalani, and Usha Mehta** were among the many women who participated. **All classes of peasants** were participating in the movement. Even some zamindars participated. The peasants focused their offensive on symbols of authority, and there was no anti-zamindar violence at all. Participation by **government officials** from lower levels of the police and administration eroded government loyalty. Muslims assisted by providing underground activists with shelter. There were no intergroup conflicts during the movement. **Muslim League opposed the movement** out of concern that minorities would be persecuted by Hindus if the British left India at that time. The **Hindu Mahasabha refused** to support the movement. The response from princely states was also minimal.

## GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

The Movement was brutally repressed by the British government in India. The press was muzzled (The **National Herald and Harijan** ceased publication for the entire duration of the struggle). The military took over many cities; police and secret service reigned supreme. Rebellious villages were fined heavily.

- By the end of 1942, in U.P. alone 16,089 persons were arrested. Throughout India the official figures for arrests stood at 91,836 by the end of 1943.
- The number of people killed in police firings was 658 till September 1942, and by 1943 it was 1060. But these were official figures. Many more had died and innumerable wounded.
- In Midnapore alone, the Government forces had burnt 31 Congress camps and 164 private houses. There were 74 cases of rape, out of which 46 were committed by the police in a single day in one village on 9 January 1943.
- There were countless **lathi-charges, floggings and imprisonments**.

- **Collective punitive fines** were extorted from the residents in the areas affected by the upsurges.

## White Terror of Indian British Government

**R.H. Niblett**, who served as District Collector of Azamgarh in eastern United Province, removed from service for being too mild with the rebels, **recorded in his diary** that the British unleashed 'white terror' using an 'incendiary police to set fire to villages for several miles' and that 'reprisals (becoming) the rule of the day.'

## Gandhi's fast on Government repression

Gandhi began a fast in February 1943 to protest British government violence. The fast was a **protest against the state's violence**. Following the announcement of the fast, domestic and international protests were organized through hartals, demonstrations, and strikes. Three members of the executive council of the viceroy resigned.

## Impact and Significance of the Quit India Movement

- The movement kept the **Congress Party united** through thick and thin.
- The **British government experienced a significant erosion in loyalty**. This also demonstrated how deeply embedded nationalism had become.
- The movement proved that **it was no longer possible to rule India without the consent of its people**.
- The significance of the movement was that it **placed the demand for independence at the top of the national movement's agenda**. After Quit India, there was no way back.
- The common people displayed **unparalleled heroism and militancy** during this conflict. The repression they faced was the most severe, and the conditions under which they offered resistance were the worst.



- **public morale and anti-British sentiment** were enhanced.

The **Quit India Movement failed**, but not without demonstrating the determination of the masses to overthrow British rule. The leadership of the Congress did not condemn the people's departure from the principle of nonviolence, but denied any responsibility for the people's violent actions.

### RELEASE OF GANDHI

Gandhiji was released from prison, on health grounds, on May 6, 1944. This led to the revival of the **Constructive Programme**. Congress committees began activities in its garb and the ban on the Congress imposed in the wake of the Quit India movement was thus overcome. The colonial government, meanwhile, put forward a plan for negotiation. **Lord Archibald Wavell**, who had replaced Linlithgow as Viceroy in October 1943, had begun to work towards another round of negotiation. The message was clear: The British had no option but to negotiate!

### RAJAJI'S PROPOSALS AND THE WAVELL PLAN

Since Pakistan resolution (Lahore, March 1940), the communal challenge persisted and the Muslim League pressed with its demand for a separate nation. The **Lahore resolution of the Muslim League** in March 1940 had **altered the discourse from the Muslims** being a 'minority' to the Muslims constituting a 'nation'. **Mohammed Ali Jinnah** was asserting this right as the sole spokesperson of the community. On **March 23, 1943 Pakistan Day** was observed. Thus a **deadlock was created between All India Muslim League and Indian National Congress**.

The **Muslim League's position** was that the Muslims and Hindus of British India were of **two separate nations and hence the Muslims had the right to their own nation** (Pakistan). The **Congress**, which included both Hindu and Muslim members, was opposed to the idea of partitioning India.

Also during the Second World War, the British government had said that any move towards an Indian statehood would be **possible only if the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Muslim League resolve their differences**.

Thus, in April 1944, when the Congress leaders were in jail, **C. Rajagopalachari** put out a proposal (also **called as the C R Formula or Rajaji Formula**) to resolve the **political deadlock between the All India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress** on the independence of British India. It contained the following:

- A **post-war commission** to be formed to demarcate the contiguous districts where the Muslims were in absolute majority and a plebiscite of the adult population there to ascertain whether they would prefer Pakistan
- In case of a partition there would be a mutual agreement to run certain essential services, like defence or communication
- The border districts could choose to join either of the two sovereign states
- The implementation of the scheme would wait till after full transfer of power (**England transferred full powers to India**)

### Objection to Rajaji Formula

In July 1944, **Gandhi proposed talks with Jinnah** based on 'Rajaji formula'. The talks did not go anywhere as Jinnah had objections to the proposal. Jinnah desired that the INC recognize the **Two-Nation Theory**. He desired that only North-West and North-East Muslims participate in the referendum, and not the entire population.

The Sikhs also looked upon the formula **unfavourably** because the formula meant a division of Punjab and although the Sikhs were a big chunk of the population, they were not in a majority in any of the districts. **V D Savarkar and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee** of the **Hindu Mahasabha** and **Srinivas Sastri** of the **National Liberal Federation** were also against the C R Formula.



## Interesting Facts about C. Rajagopalachari

- He studied law at Madras's Presidency College (now Chennai). In 1917, he was elected mayor of Salem and served in that capacity for two years.
- In 1916, he established the **Tamil Scientific Terms Society**, an organization that translated chemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy, and biology terms into simple Tamil.
- He became a legal advisor for the **Indian National Congress** after joining the organization. In 1917, Rajagopalachari defended P. Varadarajulu Naidu, an Indian independence activist, against charges of sedition.
- In 1930, **Rajagopalachari broke the salt law at Vedaranyam**, near Nagapattinam in the then Madras Presidency. He also became the **Editor of Mahatma Gandhi's newspaper, Young India**.
- Following the Madras Elections in 1937, the Congress came to power in the Madras Presidency. Rajagopalachari was elected as the first Premier of the Madras Presidency from the Congress party.
- In 1939, Rajagopalachari issued the **Temple Entry Authorization and Indemnity Act**, under which Dalits and Shanars were allowed to enter temples.
- In the absence of **Lord Mountbatten**, **Rajagopalachari** was appointed the final Governor-General of India after independence. His administration lasted from June 21, 1948, to January 26, 1950.
- He had sworn in as the **Chief Minister of Madras on April 10 in 1952**. His policy of introducing Hindi as a compulsory language in schools was highly protested by the people of Madras.
- He translated the **Ramayana into Tamil**, which was later published as **Chakravarthi Thirumagan**. In 1958, this book won the Sahitya Akademi Award for Tamil literature.

## DESAI-LIAQUAT PACT

It was a pact between **Bhulabhai Desai**, leader of the **Congress Party in the Central Legislative Assembly**, and **Liaquat Ali Khan of the Muslim League** to end the deadlock between congress and Muslim League to bring independence faster.

### Proposal under the Desai-Liaquat Pact

Desai and Khan held a number of discussions and both of them came up with the draft proposal for the **formation of an interim government at the centre**:

- Congress and League will nominate an equal number of persons in the central legislature.
- 20% of the seats will be reserved for minorities

No settlement could be reached between the Congress and the League on these lines, but the fact that a sort of parity between the Congress and the League was decided upon had far-reaching consequences.

## WAVELL PLAN: SHIMLA CONFERENCE

In **June 1945 Lord Wavell** moved to negotiate and called for the **Simla conference**. The rest of the **Congress leaders**, including **Jawaharlal Nehru**, **Sardar Patel** and the **Congress president, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** were released from jail for this. In March, 1945, Wavell had convinced **Churchill** of the imperative for a **Congress-Muslim League coalition government** as a way to deal with the post Second World War political crisis.

### The main points of the plan are as follows:

The plan was to reconstruct the **governor-executive general's council** while a new constitution was drafted. In **June 1945, Lord Wavell**, the viceroy, convened a conference in Shimla (the Shimla Conference) for this purpose. The main proposals of the Wavell Plan were as follows:

- With the **exception of the governor-general and the commander-in-chief**, all members of the executive council were to be Indians.
- **Caste Hindus and Muslims** were to have equal representation.



- The **reconstructed council was to function as an interim government** within the framework of the 1935 Act (i.e. not responsible to the Central Assembly).
- The governor-general was to exercise his veto on the advice of ministers.
- Representatives of different parties were to submit a joint list to the viceroy for nominations to the executive council. If a joint list was not possible, then separate lists were to be submitted.
- **Possibilities were to be kept open for negotiations on a new constitution once the war was finally won.**

#### Background in which Wavell Plan was announced

As the Second World War came to an end, Churchill's Conservative government in Britain was eager to find a solution to the constitutional question in India. The primary causes of his eagerness were:

The **general election in England was scheduled for mid-1945**. The Conservatives wanted to be seen as sincere in reaching a solution.

There **was pressure from the Allies** to seek further Indian cooperation in the war.

The government wanted to divert Indian energies into channels more profitable for the British

Hence, **Lord Wavell was permitted to start negotiations with Indian leaders.**

#### Response to the Plan

The proposal displeased everyone. The Simla Conference held between June 25 and July 14, 1945 ended without resolution. The **talks broke down on the right of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League to nominate members to the Viceroy's Council**. The **Muslim League insisted** on its exclusive right to nominate Muslim members to the Council. Its demand was that the Congress nominees shall only be caste Hindus and that the Indian National Congress

should not nominate a Muslim. The league also demanded the establishment of a communal veto in the Executive, **requiring a two-thirds majority** to approve decisions opposed by Muslims.

The **Congress objected** to the plan as an attempt to **reduce it to the status of a caste-based Hindu party** and insisted on its right to nominate candidates from all communities.

This was seen as a means to further the divide on communal lines and deny the Congress the status of representing the Indian people. **Lord Wavell found a council without Muslim League representation as unworkable and thus abandoned the Simla talks**. This strengthened the League's position and boosted Jinnah's position.

#### Consolidation of Muslim Identity

The years between the **Lahore resolution of 1940 and the Simla Conference in 1945** marked the **consolidation of a Muslim national identity and the emergence of Jinnah as its sole spokesperson**.

It was at a convention of Muslim League Legislators in Delhi in April 1946, that Pakistan was defined as a 'sovereign independent state'. For the first time the League also declared its composition in geographical terms as 'the region consisting of the Muslim majority provinces of Bengal and Assam in the Northeast and the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan in the Northwest'. The **Congress president Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** rejected this idea and held that the Congress stood for a united India with complete independence.

All these were developments after the Simla conference of June–July 1945 and after Churchill was voted out and replaced by a Labour Party government headed by Clement Attlee. Times had changed in a substantial sense. British Prime Minister Attlee had declared the certainty of independence to India with only the terms left to be decided.



## AZAD HIND FAUJ (INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY)

In 1942, **Mohan Singh** established the India National Army (INA). **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** revived it on October 21, 1943, during the Second World War, in order to secure India's total independence from the British Raj.

### FOUNDATION OF THE FIRST INA

A considerably large contingent of the **Indian Army was posted in the South East Asian countries** that were part of the British Empire. The **command** of the British Indian Army in the South-East Asian front simply retreated (British and allies retreated after their defeat in South East Asian countries) leaving the ranks behind as Prisoners of War (POWs).

The rapid advance of the Japanese forces in Southeast Asia uprooting the European colonial powers, such as the British, Dutch and French, led to a completely changed situation. The Indians in these countries as well as the **captured Indian soldiers** who had fought in the British army began to be mobilized and organized to fight for Indian freedom.

The total Indian population in this region was about 20 lakhs with significant concentration in Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Indonesia, Hongkong and Indo-China. In 1941, the **Japanese** devised plans to tap the nationalists in Southeast Asia, including the Indians, to cooperate with them.

The Japanese contacted **Captain Mohan Singh**, one of the most senior Indian officers, to organize an army of Indian soldiers who were now in Japan's captivity. Mohan Singh asked for Indian prisoners of war. The Indian Prisoners of War were left under Mohan Singh's command. More Indian soldiers were entrusted to Mohan Singh's responsibility in early 1942 when Malaya and Singapore fell into Japanese hands.

It was intended that the **INA would go into action** only on the invitation of the Indian National Congress and the people of India. The INA got a boost with the outbreak of **the Quit India Movement in India**. The **first INA division of 16,300 soldiers was ready by 10 September 1942 to go into action**. Mohan Singh was ambitious and told the Japanese that he wanted to raise an army of 250,000 soldiers which would be recruited largely from the civilian population. He also wanted formal public recognition by the Japanese of the Indian National Army and facilities for training his troops in batches. But the **Japanese response was not very encouraging towards these proposals**. Also, differences emerged between the Indian Army officers led by Mohan Singh and the Japanese over the role to be played by the INA. **Mohan Singh was taken into custody by the Japanese**.

### SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE AND INA

The **second phase** began with the **arrival of Subhash Bose in Singapore**. On July 2, 1943, Subhas Chandra Bose, reached Singapore. From there he went to Tokyo and after a meeting with Prime Minister Tojo, the Japanese leader declared that his country did not desire territorial expansion into India. Bose returned to Singapore and set up the **Provisional Government of Free India on October 21, 1943**. This Provisional Government declared war against Britain and the other allied nations. Japan recognised Bose's Provisional Government as its ally.

Bose enlisted civilians too into the INA and one of the regiments was made up of women. The **Rani of Jhansi regiment of the INA** was commanded by a medical doctor and daughter of freedom fighter Ammu Swaminathan from Madras, **Dr Lakshmi**. On July 6, 1944, Subhas Bose addressed a message to Gandhi over the Azad Hind Radio from Rangoon. Calling him the '**Father of the Nation**', Bose appealed to Gandhi for his blessing in what he described as 'India's last war of independence.'



### Rash Behari Bose and INA

He attempted to assassinate Lord Hardinge by throwing a bomb at his parade in Delhi on December 23, 1912 (**Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy case**). He escaped the arrest and fled to Japan in 1915. In Japan, Rash Behari Bose eventually became a naturalized citizen. Rash Behari Bose played a significant part in convincing the Japanese government to stand with Indian nationalists and, eventually, to publicly assist the Indian independence cause overseas. **On March 28-30, 1942**, Bose organised a **convention in Tokyo that resolved to establish the Indian Independence League**.

On **June 22, 1942**, he called the **League's second meeting in Bangkok**, where a resolution was passed for **inviting Subhas Chandra Bose to join the League and take leadership as its president**. It was at this conference in Bangkok that it was decided to place the **INA under an Indian Independence League** whose chairman would be Rashbehari Bose himself. Thus when Subash Chandra Bose met Rash Behari Bose in Singapore, Rashbehari transferred the control and leadership of the Indian Independence League and the INA to Subhash in July 1943. On January 21, 1945, he died in Tokyo, Japan. The Japanese government honored him with the **'Order of the Rising Sun'** before his death.

### INA with Axis Powers in War

A battalion of the INA commanded by **Shah Nawaz** accompanied the Japanese army in its march on **Imphal**. This was in late 1944 and the Axis powers, including the Japanese forces, had fallen into bad times all over. The **Imphal campaign** did not succeed and the **Japanese retreated before the final surrender** to the **British command in mid-1945**. **Shah Nawaz and his soldiers of the INA were taken prisoners and charged with treason.**

## POST-WAR NATIONAL SCENARIO

The British Indian government anticipated finding a demoralized populace when it removed the ban on the Congress and freed its leaders in June 1945. Instead, they encountered chaotic throngs that were eager to act. After being suppressed for many years, popular energy resurfaced. The release of their leaders raised people's expectations. The Wavell Plan, supported by the British Conservative government, was unable to end the constitutional impasse.

### POWER SHIFTING IN BRITAIN

In July 1945, the Labour Party formed the government in Britain. **Clement Attlee** took over as the new prime minister and **Pethick Lawrence as the new secretary of state for India**. This power shift in Britain raised hopes for an early settlement of the Indian question. Known for their sympathies with the nationalist cause in India, the **Labour leaders** had already committed themselves to freeing India, if and when they were voted to power. They had also agreed to grant India freedom by transferring authority from the British to the Indian hands.

### Shifting View Point of Government

In **September 1945**, the Indian British government announced that a constituent Assembly would be convened **after the elections** and that the government was working according to the spirit of the Cripps Offer. The government's change in the vantage point was dictated by the following factors:

- **Balance of Power Shifted:** The end of the War resulted in a change in balance of global power—the UK was no more a big power, while the USA and USSR emerged as superpowers, both of which favored freedom for India.
- **Change in Party in Britain:** The new Labor administration was more receptive to Indian demands. There was a wave of socialist radical governments throughout Europe.



- **Britain's economy worn out:** British soldiers were weary and tired and the British economy lay shattered.
- **Anti-Imperialistic Sign:** There was an anti-imperialist wave in South-East Asia—in Vietnam and Indonesia—resisting efforts to replant French and Dutch rule there.
- **Fear of Another Revolt within India:** British Officials feared another Congress revolt, a revival of the 1942 situation but much more dangerous because of a likely combination of attacks on communications, agrarian revolts, labor trouble, army disaffection joined by government officials and the police in the presence of INA men with some military experience.
- **Britishers wary of Indians:** To suppress the national movement, the British-Indian government could no longer rely on Indian personnel for its civil administration and armed forces. Patriotic ideas had entered the ranks of the professional Indian army, as evidenced by the Indian National Army.
- **The unprecedented British repression** of the 1942 movement was **a major topic of discussion** during the election campaign.
  - ♦ Many, including ordinary people and cadres, had been martyred in the cause.
  - ♦ A **typical election speech** would relate the tale of **repression with all details of brutality**, move on to condemning the officials who were guilty and end with the promise (or threat) that Congress governments would enquire into these cases and mete out punishment to the guilty officials.
- The **second issue raised** during the election campaign **concerned the members of Subhash Bose's Indian National Army** who were taken prisoner by the Allies and tried for atrocities and war crimes.
  - ♦ Jawaharlal Nehru hailed them as misguided patriots and pleaded for leniency, given that India was on the cusp of significant change.
  - ♦ Following this, the Congress passed a resolution in support of the cause.
  - ♦ **Defence of INA prisoners** in the court was organised by **Bhulabhai Desai, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Kailash Nath Katju, Jawaharlal Nehru and Asaf Ali**.
  - ♦ In **addition to legal help**, Congress organized **relief funds and arranged employment** for the INA men.
  - ♦ INA meetings and Congress election meetings were frequently indistinguishable.
  - ♦ **INA Relief and Enquiry Committee** distributed small sums of money and food, and helped arrange employment for the affected

### ELECTION IN THE CENTRE AND PROVINCES

The Attlee government in Britain asked the Indian Viceroy to announce on 21 August 1945, the **holding of new elections for the Indian Legislatures** in the approaching winter of 1945-46. The elections were overdue for the centre (last elected in 1934), as well as for the provinces (last elected in 1937). The elections were necessary for "early full self-government" for India. The elections were duly held in the winter of 1945-46.

### The Election Campaign

The contest was dominated by the **Congress and the Muslim League**. The elections were especially significant for the **League's ambition for Pakistan**. The election campaign evolved into a massive exercise in citizen mobilization. The following **major issues** were also addressed:

### Election Results

- In the **elections to the central assembly**, out of 102 seats, Congress won 57, League 30, Independents 5, Akalis 2 and Europeans 8.



- In the **elections to the provincial assemblies**, Congress won 923 of 1585 seats, 23 of 38 labor seats but was defeated by the Muslim League in the Muslim seats.
- Elections of 1946 were decisive.
  - ♦ The result made it clear that the **Congress represented the large masses of the country**.
  - ♦ It was equally clear, however, that the Muslim League spoke for Most Muslims.
- The Congress was to go on to form governments in the provinces of Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, Central Provinces and Berar and NWFP.
- **The League** formed ministries in Bengal and Sind.
- In **Punjab**, after the elections of 1946, some negotiations between Muslim League and Akalis were carried out with a possible coalition in mind. This had been unsuccessful and **Akalis joined with Unionist and Congress to form a coalition ministry**.

- As it became evident that a united India would be extremely unstable, the League earned the negotiation ability to seek a separate Muslim state even if Congress ultimately prevailed.
- Due to different electorates and a small voter turnout—less than 10% of eligible voters in the provinces and fewer than 1% in the Central Assembly—**communal voting occurred** during the election, in contrast to the strong anti-British solidarity seen in the multiple upsurges.
- In addition, these were the final general elections held in British India; subsequent elections were held in India in 1951 and Pakistan in 1970.

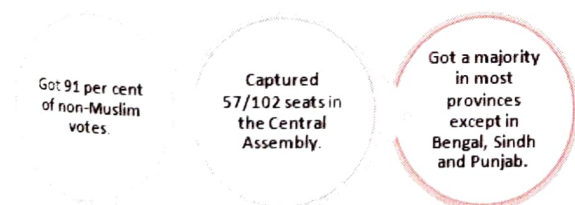
### INA TRIALS

The Indian National Army trials (**also known as the INA trials and the Red Fort trials**) was the British Indian trial by court-martial of a number of officers of the Indian National Army (INA) between November 1945 and May 1946, on various charges of treason, torture, murder and abetment to murder, during the Second World War.

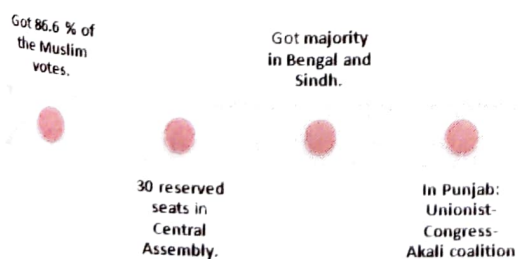
**INA trials were held at the Red Fort in New Delhi.** The Indian National Congress fielded its best lawyers in defence of the INA soldiers. Nehru, who had given up his legal practice as early as in 1920 responding to Gandhi's call for non-cooperation, wore his black gown to appear in defence. Even though the INA did not achieve much militarily, the trials made a huge impact in inspiring the masses.

The British government's arrogance once again set the stage for another mass mobilization. The Indian National Congress, after the debacle at the Simla Conference (June 25 and July 14, 1945) plunged into reaching out to the masses by way of public meetings across the country. The **INA figured more prominently as an issue** in all these meetings than even the Congress's pitch for votes in the elections.

It was in this context that the British government sent up three prominent officers of the INA – **Shah Nawaz Khan, P.K. Sehgal and G.S. Dhillon to trial**. The press in India reported the trials with



Performance of Congress



Performance of Muslim League

### Significant Features of Elections

- The 1946 national and provincial elections were a strategic victory for Jinnah and the people who supported partition.



all empathy and editorials sought the soldiers freed immediately. The INA week was marked by processions, hartals and even general strikes across the nation demanding release of the soldiers.

The choice of the three men to be sent up for trial ended up rallying all political opinion behind the campaign. The **Muslim League, the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Hindu Maha Sabha**, all those who had stayed clear of the Quit India campaign, joined the protests and raised funds for their defence. Although the trial court found Sehgal, Dhillon and Shah Nawaz Khan guilty of treason, the commander in chief remitted the sentences and set them free on January 6, 1946. The INA trials, indeed, set the stage for yet another important stage in the history of the Indian National Movement in February 1946. The ratings of the **Royal Indian Navy (RIN)** raised the banner of revolt.

### Three Upsurges

The nationalist sentiment which reached a crescendo **around the INA trials** developed into **violent confrontations** with the authority in the winter of 1945-46. There were three major upsurges.

1. **November 21, 1945**- in Calcutta over the INA trials.
2. **February 11, 1946**- in Calcutta against the seven-year sentence to INA officer Rashid Ali.
3. **February 18, 1946**- in Bombay, strike by the Royal Indian Navy Ratings

### Upsurge 1 (November 21, 1945)

The upsurge began with a procession of students, both Hindu and Muslim, belonging to **Forward Bloc, Students Federation and Islamia College**. On 21 November 1945, students marched at the call of the Forward Bloc towards the administrative quarters in **Dalhousie Square**. The processionists were joined on the way by the members of the Students Federation and the League students' organization. Combined, these **students tied the nationalist, the**

**League and the red flags together** to symbolize the need for anti-imperialist people's solidarity.

The demonstrators were halted by the armed police on Dharamtolla Street for the night and fired upon the following day, killing a Hindu and a Muslim student. The firing instantly inflamed the entire city and the people of Calcutta went into action by disrupting traffic, burning cars and Lorries and setting up barricades on the streets.

The **Calcutta turmoil** in particular, and **the nationwide agitation in general** over the INA issue, did not go altogether in vain. The **authorities decided to climb down**, first by announcing in December 1945 to **try only those INA members who could be accused of murder and brutalities**, and then by **remitting in January 1946, the sentences passes against the first batch of the accused**.

### Upsurge 2 (February 11, 1946)

The INA agitation was by no means over by the end of 1945. It struck again in February 1946, and at the same epicenter – the volatile Calcutta. The league students of the city gave a strike call to protest **on 11 February 1946** against the sentence of 7 years' imprisonment passed **on A. Rashid Ali of the INA**. Other student organizations including the Communist-led Student Federation, joined in amidst spontaneous display of inter-communal solidarity. **Section 144** was imposed in Dharamtolla Street in Calcutta and arrests were made and lathi charges took place.

### Upsurge 3 (February 18, 1946)

On 18 February, **naval ratings of HMIS Talwar went on strike** protesting the treatment meted out to them. **B.C. Dutt**, a rating (the designation for the Indians employed in the various war-ships and elsewhere in the Royal Indian Navy) in the HMIS Talwar was arrested for **scribbling 'Quit India' on the panel of the ship**. This provoked a strike by the 1,100 ratings on the ship. The ratings resented the racist behaviour of the English commanders, the poor quality of the food and abuses that were the



norm. Dutt's arrest served as the trigger for the revolt on February 18, 1946.

The day after, the revolt was **joined by the ratings in the Fort Barracks and the Castle** and a large number of them went into the Bombay cities in commandeered trucks waving Congress flags and shouting anti-British slogans. Soon, the workers in the textile mills **of Bombay** joined the struggle. The **trade unions in Bombay and Calcutta** called for a **sympathy strike** and the two cities turned into war zones.

Barricades were erected all over and pitched battles were fought. Shopkeepers downed shutters and hartals became the order of the day. Trains were stopped in the two cities with people sitting on the tracks. On news of the Bombay revolt reaching Karachi, ratings in the **HMIS Hindustan and other naval establishments in Karachi** went on a strike on February 19.

The **strike wave spread to almost all the naval establishments across India** and at least 20,000 ratings from 78 ships and 20 shore establishments ended up revolting in the days after February 18, 1946. There were strikes, expressing support to the ratings in the **Royal Indian Air Force** stationed in Bombay, Poona, Calcutta, Jessore and Ambala units. The **sepoys in the army cantonment station at Jabalpur** too went on strike. The ratings, in many places, **hoisted the Congress, the Communist, and the Muslim League flags together on the ship masts during the revolt.**

While the trade unions came out in solidarity with the ratings in no time and the strikes in Bombay and Calcutta and Madras were strong

expressions against British rule in India, these did not last for long and the ratings were forced to surrender soon. **Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Jinnah** took the initiative to bring the revolt to an end.

### Assessment of the INA Upsurge

These upsurges were characterized by a direct and violent confrontation with authority, which had obvious limitations. Only the more radical sections were permitted to participate. These uprisings were brief and confined to a few urban centers, whereas widespread INA activity reached even the most remote villages. **Communal unity** was observed as more **organizational than unity** among the people. Muslim ratings sought advice from the League, while the rest went to the Congress and the Socialists. Despite considerable erosion of the morale of the bureaucracy, the British infrastructure to repress was intact. They were soon able to control the situation. It was a Maratha battalion in Bombay that rounded up the ratings and restored them to their barracks. This event, even more, strengthened the determination of all the Indian people to witness the end of British rule. Another remarkable feature was the **massive out rush of public support** for the mutineers. After the mutiny, the British realised that it could no longer hold on to India under them.



*Limitation of the upsurges*



### Impact of the Three Upsurges on British

These upsurges compelled the British to make some concessions:

- The government announced on December 1, 1946 that **only INA members accused of murder or brutal treatment** of fellow prisoners would be tried.
- In January 1947, the first band of prisoners had their prison sentences commuted.
- In February 1947, Indian troops were withdrawn from **Indo-China and Indonesia**.
- It was decided (November 1946) to send a parliamentary delegation to India.
- In January 1946, the decision to send a **Cabinet Mission** was made.

### Relationship of the Congress with the three upsurges

The relationship of the **Congress with the three upsurges was rather complex. Individual Congressmen and women took part in the agitation.** Congress-minded student organisations were involved in the protests along with those linked with the Communists, Socialists and the Muslim League. Congress leaders condemned the repression in no uncertain words.

The **Congress did not officially support these upsurges** because of their tactics and timing. The **overall assessment of the Congress leaders** was that the **time was not yet right for an all-out struggle.** They understood the **repressive power of the state was intact** and advised the protestors to be peaceful.

The Congress also believed that **the possibility of negotiations had to be exhausted before struggle could be contemplated.** This was set out in a **resolution of the AICC on 22 September 1945.** **Negotiations had been an integral part of the Congress strategy,** to be explored before a mass

movement could be launched, especially when the British were seen to be preparing to leave soon.

### Resolution of the AICC on 22 September 1945:

The guiding maxim of the Congress must remain: negotiations and settlement when possible and non-cooperation and direct action when necessary." This was the strategy of the Congress on the whole.

**Gandhi on upsurges:** In Gandhi's opinion, the mutiny was badly advised: if they mutinied for India's freedom, they were doubly wrong; if they had any grievances, they should have waited for the guidance of leaders

### THE CABINET MISSION (MARCH 1946)

The changed global scenario in the post-World War II context led to the setting up of the Cabinet Mission. A high-powered mission of **three** British cabinet members (**Pethick Lawrence**, Secretary of State for India; **Stafford Cripps**, President of the Board of Trade; and **A.V. Alexander**, First Lord of Admiralty) was sent to India to find out ways and means of a negotiated, **peaceful transfer of power in India.** The Cabinet Mission reached Delhi on March 24, 1946 and began work on its brief: to set up a national government before the final transfer of power. The **mission's chairman was Pethick Lawrence.**

The **mission proposed to constitute a 'representative' body** by way of elections across the provinces and the princely states and entrust this body with the task of making a constitution for free India. The **idea of partition did not figure at this stage.** Instead, the mission's proposal was for a **loose-knit confederation in which the Muslim League could dominate** the administration in the **North-East and North-West** provinces while the Congress would administer rest of the provinces.



## MAJOR PROVISIONS OF CABINET MISSION PLAN

### Rejection of the demand for a full-fledged Pakistan

- The Pakistan so formed would include a large non-Muslim population—38 per cent in the North-West and 48 per cent in the North-East;
- The very concept of **communal self-determination** would actually require the separation of Hindu-majority western Bengal and Sikh- and Hindu-dominated Ambala and Jullundur divisions of Punjab (some Sikh leaders had already demanded a separate state if the country were to be partitioned);
- Long established regional ties would be disrupted if Bengal and Punjab were partitioned;
- Partition would cause **economic and administrative issues**, such as communication issues between the western and eastern regions of Pakistan; and
- The division of the armed forces would be dangerous.

### Constituent Assembly

The Mission recommended **setting up** a **Constituent Assembly** consisting of the representatives of all the major groups.

- **Membership**- The constituent assembly would consist of 389 members, with provincial assemblies contributing 292, chief commissioner's provinces contributing 4, and princely states contributing 93.
- **Election**-The members of the Constituent Assembly were to be elected by those provincial assemblies by proportional representation. This was through voting among three groups—General, Muslim, and Sikhs.

### The Federal Formula

The Cabinet Mission was persuaded that **Pakistan was not viable and thus recommended a federal constitutional structure for a united India.**

- **Provincial autonomy**-The provinces should have full autonomy
- **Common centre**: A common centre would control defence, communication and external affairs.
- **Residuary Powers**-All the residual powers would belong to the provinces
- **Question on Communal Issue**: Communal questions in the central legislature were to be decided by a simple majority of both communities present and voting.
- **Three-tier executive and legislature** at provincial, section and union levels.

### The Grouping

To safeguard the minorities' autonomy within the framework of a united India, the Mission Plan grouped the existing provincial assemblies into the following three sections:

- **Section A** — composed of Madras, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, C.P., and Orissa
- **Section B** — consisting of Punjab, NWFP, and Sind
- **Section C** —Bengal and Assam
- ♦ **In the Constituent Assembly**, the three sections would meet separately to decide on group constitutions. A province could come out from a group after the first general elections. A province could request a review of the group or union's constitution after ten years.

### Princely States

- These states were no longer to be under the British government's paramountcy. They would be able to negotiate with successor governments or the British government.

### Interim Government

- Meanwhile during this process, an interim government was to be formed from the constituent assembly



### Why did the British decide to transfer the Power?

With the end of World War II in April of 1945, India's struggle for independence entered a new phase. With the release of the national leaders from prison, the Indian citizens began to anticipate another massive freedom movement. **Due to the following factors**, the British government was unable to ignore India's demand for independence and decided to transfer power:

- **Shift in Balance of Power:** The **Second World War changed the balance of power in the world as the United States of America and the Soviet Union emerged as the big powers**, not Britain. Both the USA and USSR supported India's demand for freedom. In his situation, a successful settlement of the Indian question would strengthen the future security of the British Empire, ensure British prestige in the East, and even lead to India remaining within the Commonwealth.
- **Adverse impact of war on Britain:** Britain **suffered huge economic and military losses in the Second World War** despite being on the winning side. Also, the British soldiers were tired of fighting the war for nearly six years. Hence, **they had no desire to indulge in further fighting against the Indian people's struggle for freedom**.
- **Change in British Politics:** In Britain, the **Labour Party took the place** of the Conservatives as the government. The **Labour party was sympathetic to the cause of India's freedom** and many of its members supported the Congress's demands.
- **Determination of Indians:** **Nationalism had penetrated into every section of the Indian population. Indians would no longer tolerate the humiliation of foreign rule.** They were determined to fight for independence.
- **Constitutionalism** or Congress Raj had proved to be a big morale-booster and helped in deeper penetration of patriotic sentiments among the masses.
- **Popular Upsurges:** There was the naval mutiny in February 1946. Also, there was a struggle for the release of INA prisoners. In addition, from 1945 to 1946, there were numerous agitations, strikes, hartals, and protests across the nation. Students in schools and colleges took the lead in organizing these upsurges.
- **Elections to Provincial Assemblies, 1946:** The Congress won an overwhelming majority of general seats. Similarly, the Muslim League won the majority of seats reserved for Muslims.
- **Limitation of British policy in India:** The British **strategy of conciliation and repression had its limitations and contradictions. After the Cripps' Offer there was little left to offer for conciliation except full freedom**.
- **Nationalist leanings:** There were signs of nationalist leanings in all the major instruments of British rule namely-civil administration, armed forces, police, and the bureaucracy. Hence, the **British Indian government could no longer use these instruments safely to suppress the national movement**.
- ♦ The Indian National Army (INA) had demonstrated that the **Royal Indian Army had adopted patriotic principles**.
- ♦ The **Naval Mutiny at Bombay in February 1946 showed the nationalist leanings** of the Royal Indian Navy.
- ♦ There were **widespread strikes in the Royal Indian Air Force**.
- The **lack of European ICS recruits and a programme of Indianization** had ended the British ICS hegemony as early as the First World War, and by 1939 there was a British-Indian parity, leading to a protest in favor of nationalism among the bureaucracy and the loyalist groups. Economic concerns and tiredness were results of the protracted battle. There was now just a war-weary, decimated bureaucracy left after the events of 1942.



### View on transfer of power

**B.R. Tomlinson:** The British Cabinet saw the growing rift between the Congress and the Muslim League as their trump card... Both Linlithgow and the Cabinet looked to the rivalry of the Congress and the League as their most useful weapon against the demands of either.

**Lord Wavell (October 1946):** Our time in India is limited and our power to control events is almost gone. We have only prestige and previous momentum to trade on and these will not last long

### CONTROVERSY OVER THE 'GROUPING CLAUSE'

The **Muslim League** interpreted the groupings to be compulsory, for that might brighten up the possibility of a future full-fledged Pakistan by breaking down **the Congress-administered Muslim-majority provinces of NWFP** (in section B) and Assam (in section C) into it.

**Congress** interpreted that the Cabinet Mission Plan was against the creation of Pakistan because, Grouping of provinces into three sections was optional; a single constituent assembly was recommended;

The Muslim League no longer had a veto.

## OBJECTION, ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION OF CABINET MISSION

### Objection

Different parties objected to the Plan on different grounds.

Congress	Muslim League
Congress wanted <b>that Provinces should not have to wait till the first general elections</b> to come out of a group. Congress felt that the provinces should have the option of not joining a group in the first place.	The League demanded that <b>grouping of provinces should be compulsory</b> . This demand was put forward with a view to the future secession of sections B and C into Pakistan. The Muslim League believed that Congress would reject the Cabinet Mission plan and government would invite the League to form the interim government.
The Congress was also <b>critical of the proposed Constituent Assembly's lack of provision</b> for elected members from princely states.	-
Compulsory grouping of Provinces contradicted the demand of provincial autonomy.	-

### Acceptance and Rejection

**6 June 1946:** Jinnah sounded out his acceptance to the long-term plan put forward by the Cabinet Mission on **June 6, 1946**.

**15 June 1946:** After elaborate consultations, the **viceroys Wavell issued invitations on 15 June 1946** to the 14 men to join the interim government. The invitees were: Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai

Patel, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari and Hari Krishna Mahtab (on behalf of the INC); Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Mohammed Ismail Khan, Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin and Abdul Rab Nishtar (from the Muslim League) and Sardar Baldev Singh (on behalf of the Sikh community), Sir N.P. Engineer (to represent the Parsis), Jagjivan



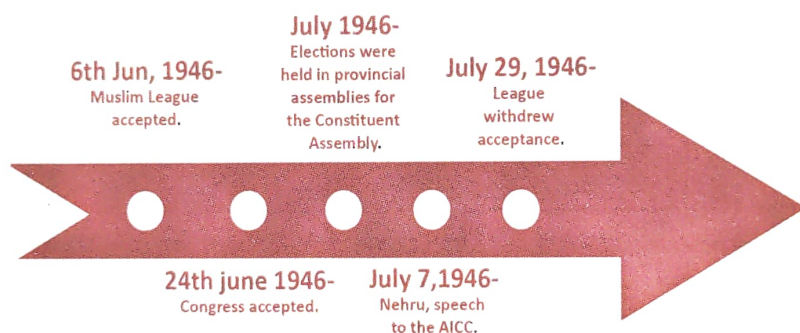
Ram (representing the scheduled castes) and John Mathai (as representative of the Indian Christians).

**July 7, 1946:** The Congress perceived the Cabinet Mission's plan as a clear sanction for the **setting up of a Constituent Assembly**. Nehru conveyed through his speech at the AICC, on July 7, 1946, that the Indian National Congress accepted the proposal. **Nehru stated** "We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided to go into the Constituent Assembly (implying that the Constituent Assembly was sovereign and would decide the rules of procedure). The big probability is that there would be no grouping as NWFP and Assam would have objections to joining sections Band C."

**29 July 1946:** Meanwhile, the **Congress proposed Zakir Hussain** from its quota of five nominees to the interim council. The **Muslim League objected** to this and, on 29 July 1946, **Jinnah announced that the League would not participate in the process to form the Constituent Assembly**. Thus announced that the League stood opposed to the cabinet Mission plan. This invited a sharp reaction from the British administration.

**12 August 1946:** On 12 August 1946, the **viceroys (Wavell) announced that he was inviting Nehru** (Congress president) to form the provisional government. After consultation with Nehru, 12 members of the National Interim Government were announced on 25 August 1946.

**16 August 1946:** The League, meanwhile, gave a call for '**Direct Action**' on 16 August 1946.



### Wavell's 'Breakdown Plan'

Wavell presented his plan to the Cabinet Mission in May 1946. It visualized a **middle course** between "repression" and "scuttle". This plan envisaged the withdrawal of the British Army and officials to the Muslim provinces of North-West and North-East and handing over the rest of the country to the Congress. Though superseded by the Cabinet Mission Plan, Wavell's plan was an evidence of:

- British recognition of the impossibility of suppressing any future Congress-led rebellion; and
- Desire in some high official circles to make a "Northern Ireland" of Pakistan.
- Absence of provision for elected members from the princely states in the constituent assembly (they could only be nominated by the princes) was not acceptable.

### DIRECT ACTION DAY

The Muslim League announced 16 August 1946 as "Direct Action Day" for **winning its Pakistan demand**. There was **bloodshed in Calcutta** and then in a chain of reactions spread over other areas

of the country, notably in Bombay, eastern Bengal and Bihar, a certain part of the U.P., NWFP and Punjab, including in Delhi. In Calcutta, the League rowdies, encouraged by the League Premier of Bengal, **Suhrawardy**, had a field day on 16 August



round of discussion. Threatened by Jinnah's ability to unleash civil war, Lord Wavell proposed once again, to Jinnah, that the League participate in the interim government. The League was allowed to join:

- Without giving up the 'direct action';
- Despite its rejection of the Cabinet Mission's long-term and short-term plans; and
- Despite insistence on compulsory grouping with decisions being taken by a majority vote by a section as a whole (as this would reduce the opponents of Pakistan in Assam and NWFP to a position of helpless minority)

The Muslim League accepted the proposal but Jinnah refused to join the interim Government. The interim government was reconstituted on October 26, 1946. Those who joined on behalf of the League were Liaquat Ali Khan, I.I. Chundrigar, A. R. Nishtar, Ghazanfar Ali Khan and Jogendra Nath Mandal.

But there was no let-up in the animosity between the Congress and the League and this was reflected in the functioning (rather non-functioning) of the interim government. The League ministers made it a point to disagree with actions taken by the Congress colleagues. The League, meanwhile, was determined against cooperating in the making of the constituent assembly

## Ministers of Interim Government (September 2, 1946–August 15, 1947)

### 14 Ministers of Interim Government

S.No.	Minister	Ministry
1.	Jawaharlal Nehru	Vice President of Executive Council; External Affairs and Common Wealth Relations
2.	Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel	Home, Information and Broadcasting
3.	Baldev Singh	Defence
4.	Dr. John Mathai	Industries and Supplies
5.	C. Rajagopalachari	Education

## INTERIM GOVERNMENT

government.

Congress agreed to the constitution of the interim building latrines. It was in this context that the Delhi authorities began organizing rations and was the head of the interim government) that be protected by the Indian state (Nehru by then the Muslims were Indian nationals and hence must there (on 9 September 1946) and conveyed that and other places). It was only after Gandhi arrived in Delhi were held in transit camps (in Purana Quila Muslims who were hounded out of their homes followed.

This was when Gandhi set out on his own course to arrive in Calcutta and decided to stay on at a deserted house in Belaghata, a locality that was worst affected, accompanied only by a handful of by suddenly resorting to large scale violent attacks on the non-Muslims. The worst-affected regions included Calcutta, Mumbai, Noakhali, Bihar, and Garhmukteshwar (United Provinces).

The Interim Government was formed on 2nd September 1946 with Congress members alone with Jawaharlal Nehru as the de facto head. Nehru assumed office on 2 September 1946. Yet another round of communal violence broke out across the country and more prominently in Bombay and Ahmedabad. Lord Wavell set out on another



S.No.	Minister	Ministry
6.	C.H. Bhabha	Works, Mines and Power
7.	Rajendra Prasad	Agriculture and Food
8.	Jagjivan Ram	Labour
9.	Asaf Ali	Railways
10.	Liaquat Ali Khan (Muslim League)	Finance
11.	Ibrahim Ismail Chundrigar (Muslim League)	Commerce
12.	Abdur Rab Nishtar (Muslim League)	Communication
13.	Ghazanfar Ali Khan (Muslim League)	Health
14.	Jogendra Nath Mandal (Muslim League)	Law

## CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

A constituent assembly was formed in accordance with the **Cabinet Mission plan**. The total strength of the assembly was 389 (**Provincial assemblies sending 292, chief commissioner's provinces sending 4, and princely states sending 93 members**). The **assembly had its first meeting in December, 1946**. The Muslim League **did not attend the Constituent assembly**. Consequently, the **Assembly had to confine itself to passing a general 'Objectives Resolution' drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru stating the ideals of an independent sovereign republic** with autonomous units, adequate minority safeguards and social, political and economic democracy.

## CRISIS IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The **Muslim League refused to attend informal cabinet decision-making meetings**. It questioned

the decisions and appointments made by the Congress members. **Liaquat Ali Khan** as the finance minister restricted and encumbered the efficient functioning of other ministries.

The League had only sought a **foothold in the government to fight for Pakistan**. For them, it was a continuation of the civil war by other means. The Congress demand that the British get the League to change its attitude in the Interim Government or quit was voiced ever since the League joined the Interim Government.

In February 1947, **nine Congress members of the cabinet wrote to the viceroy demanding the resignation of League members** and threatening the withdrawal of their own nominees. The League also demanded the **dissolution of the Constituent Assembly**. A crisis seemed to be developing rapidly.